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CREATING A COHERENT SCORE: THE MUSIC OF SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY COMPUTER ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

BY

JAMES SEBASTIAN TATE



Music Department, Durham University

THESIS

This thesis is submitted to Durham University in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

- December 2020 -

CREATING A COHERENT SCORE: THE MUSIC OF SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY COMPUTER ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

JAMES SEBASTIAN TATE

ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a comprehensive exploration into the music of the ludic genre (Hourigan, 2005) known as a Computer Role-Playing Game (CRPG) and its two main sub-divisions: Japanese and Western Role-Playing Games (JRPGs & WRPGs). It focuses on the narrative category known as genre fiction, concentrating on fantasy fiction (Turco, 1999) and seeks to address one overall question: How do fantasy CRPG composers incorporate the variety of musical material needed to create a coherent score across the JRPG and WRPG divide?

Seven main chapters form the thesis text. Chapter One provides an introduction to the thesis, detailing the research contributions in addition to outlining a variety of key terms that must be understood to continue with the rest of the text. A database accompanying this thesis showcases the vast range of CRPGs available; a literature review tackles relevant existing materials. Chapters Two and Three seek to provide the first canonical history of soundtracks used in CRPGs by dissecting typical narrative structures for games so as to provide context to their musical scores. Through analysis of existing game composer interviews, cultural influences are revealed. Chapters Four and Five mirror one another with detailed discussion respectively regarding JRPG and WRPG music including the influence that anime and Hollywood cinema have had upon them. In Chapter Six, the use of CRPG music outside of video games is explored, particularly the popularity of JRPG soundtracks in the concert hall. Chapter Seven concludes the thesis, summarising research contributions achieved and areas for future work. Throughout these chapters, the core task is to explain how the two primary sub-genres of CRPGs parted ways and why the music used to accompany these games differs so drastically.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
FIGURES AND TABLES	5
AUDIO TRACKS OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES USED	10
STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT	15
FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	16
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	18
1.1 Research Contributions	18
1.2 A Coherent Score	19
1.3 What are Single-Player Fantasy Role-Playing Games?	19
1.4 CRPG Database	24
1.5 Literature Review	27
1.6 Conclusion	44
Appendices	45
CHAPTER 2: A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN FANTASY CRPGS – BEFORE THE MILLENIUM	46
2.1 A Case for Definitions	46
2.2 Precursors to the CRPG	47
2.3 An Overview of Computer RPGs and Their Music	55
2.4 The History of Music in Single-Player Fantasy CRPGs: 1974 – 2000	59
2.4.1 The Dark Ages: 1974 – 1979	59
2.4.2 The Bronze Age: 1979 – 1983	60
2.4.3 The Silver Age: 1983 – 1985	63
2.4.4 The Early Golden Age: 1985 – 1987	64
2.4.5 The Golden Age Part I: 1987 – 1993	72
2.4.6 The Golden Age Part II: 1993 – 1996	91
2.4.7 The Platinum Age: 1996 – 2000	107
2.5 Conclusion	126
Appendices	127
CHAPTER 3: A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN FANTASY CRPGS – THE MODERN AGE	128
3.1 Introduction	128
3.2 The History of Music in Single-Player Fantasy CRPGs: 2000 – 2020	128
3.2.1 PS2/Xbox/GameCube Generation: 2000 Onwards	128
3.2.2 PS3/Xbox 360/Wii Generation: 2005 Onwards	143
3.2.3 PS4/Xbox One/Switch Generation: 2012 Onwards	164
3.3 A Case for a New Model	184
3.4 Conclusion	186
Appendices	188

CHAPTER 4: MUSIC IN SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY JRPGs	189
4.1 Background	189
4.2 Advancing the Story	190
4.3 A Non-Homogenous Musical Style	192
4.4 Cultural Influence	198
4.5 Japanese Fantasy: A Myriad of Possibilities	218
4.6 Thematic Templates in JRPGs	220
4.7 Conclusion	231
 CHAPTER 5: MUSIC IN SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY WESTERN RPGs	 233
5.1 Background	233
5.2 Advancing the Story	234
5.3 A Homogenous Musical Style	237
5.4 Cultural Influence	239
5.5 Western Fantasy: Variations on a Theme	251
5.6 Fade In/Out Soundscapes	252
5.7 Thematic 'Templates' in WRPGs	256
5.8 Conclusion	263
 CHAPTER 6: THE ALLURE OF THE JRPG SOUND IN VIDEO GAME MUSIC CONCERTS	 265
6.1 Background	265
6.2 Concert Style	272
6.3 The Data Set	275
6.4 Orchestrating and Arranging Video Game Music for Concerts	287
6.5 The Use of Melody	289
6.6 Conclusion	290
Appendices	292
 CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS	 293
 VIDEO GAMES CITED	 299
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 308
 APPENDICES	 343

FIGURES AND TABLES

Notes

- Unless otherwise credited, I have created or transcribed all the figures found in this thesis.
- Screen captures of videogames were taken by me, unless otherwise noted. References to the games in question can be found at the end of the thesis under the 'Video Games Cited' section.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

- Fig. 1.1 – No. of CRPGs released per year.
- Fig. 1.2 – No. of CRPGs Inhabiting Genres of Fiction.
- Fig. 1.3 – No. of CRPGs Released per Country.
- Fig. 1.4 – No. of CRPGs shown to either be unique IPs or series games.
- Fig. 1.5 – Chatman's Model of the Components of a Narrative.
- Fig. 1.6 – The back cover to *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* has a blurb that purely describes the game's narrative and omits any reference to gameplay – *Taken from Deviant Art*.
- Table 1.1 – Summary of the stories of *Star Wars: Episode IV* and *Final Fantasy X* and their relation to "The Hero's Journey" narrative structure.

CHAPTER 2: A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN FANTASY CRPGS – WORKING TOWARDS COHERENCE

- Fig. 2.1 – The Official 5th Edition Logo for the TRPG Dungeons and Dragons.
- Fig. 2.2 – Blank Character Sheet of D&D Showing Attributes and Skills - *Available as a free download from the Wizards of the Coast website*.
- Fig. 2.3 – Vinyl Album Cover for the AD&D "First Quest: The Music" – *Taken from the website Discogs*.
- Fig. 2.4 – CD Album Cover for the D&D Official Roleplaying Soundtrack by Midnight Syndicate – *Taken from the website Discogs*.
- Fig. 2.5 - Game Consoles by Country per Year.
- Fig. 2.6 – Box Art for the Apple II CRPG *Beneath Apple Manor* – *Taken from Wikipedia*.
- Fig. 2.7 – Piano Transcription of *The Black Onyx* Main Title Motif by Tokuhiko Uwabo.
- Fig. 2.8 – Box Art for *Dragon Quest* – *Taken from the website Giant Bomb*.
- Fig. 2.9 – Box Art for US-version *Dragon Warrior* – *Taken from the website Giant Bomb*.
- Fig. 2.10 – Transcription of the 'Main Theme' (Overture March) to *Dragon Quest* by Koichi Sugiyama.
- Fig. 2.11 – Box Art to the Japanese release of *Final Fantasy* showcasing a Japanese art-style – *Taken from the website BOX=ART*.
- Fig. 2.12 – Box Art to the US release of *Final Fantasy* showcasing a Westernised art-style – *Taken from the website BOX=ART*.
- Fig. 2.13 – Transcription of the 'Opening Theme' to *Final Fantasy* by Nobuo Uematsu.

- Fig. 2.14 – Title Screen to *Miracle Warriors: Seal of the Dark Lord* on the Sega Master System – *Taken from Internet Archive.*
- Fig. 2.15 – Title Screen to *Haja no Fūin* on the NES – *Taken from the website GameFAQs.*
- Fig. 2.16 – Transcription of the “Title” to *Miracle Warriors: Seal of the Dark Lord* on Sega Master System.
- Fig. 2.17 – Transcription of the “Title” to *Haja no Fūin (Miracle Warriors: Seal of the Dark Lord)* on the NES.
- Fig. 2.18 – Transcription of ‘Feena’s Theme’ from *Ys* composed by Yuzo Koshiro and Mieko Ishikawa.
- Fig. 2.19 – The different narrative-structural elements shown in the title screen of *Phantasy Star* – *Taken from Giant Bomb.*
- Fig. 2.20 – Transcription of the “Main Title” to *Phantasy Star* by Tokuhiko Uwabo.
- Fig. 2.21 – *Dungeon Master: The Album* CD Cover – *Taken from Game-OST.*
- Fig. 2.22 - Transcription of “Theme of Love” from *Final Fantasy IV* by Nobuo Uematsu.
- Fig. 2.23 – The CD and Hardback Sheet Music Book for Piano Collections: *Final Fantasy IV* – *Taken from Game-OST.*
- Fig. 2.24 – Transcription of “Dear Friends” from *Final Fantasy V* by Nobuo Uematsu.
- Fig. 2.25 - Secret of Mana Title Screen showing the second credit – “Composed by H. Kikuta”.
- Fig. 2.26 - Opening Credit Crawl of *Final Fantasy VI* where “Omen” – the first guise of “Terra’s Theme” – is played.
- Fig. 2.27 - The US box art for *Lunar: Eternal Blue* for the Mega CD with its anime-style visual aesthetic – *Taken from an eBay seller (sale expired).*
- Fig. 2.28 – Transcription of “Adventure Road” from *Lunar: Eternal Blue* by Noriyuki Iwadare.
- Fig. 2.29 - Transcription of “Larpa” from *Lunar: Eternal Blue* by Noriyuki Iwadare.
- Fig. 2.30 - Transcription based off the .spc file to ‘Morning Sunlight’ from *Chrono Trigger* by Yasunori Mitsuda.
- Fig. 2.31 - A still image from a live action cutscene from the 1997 WRPG *Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny* – *Taken from Old PC Gaming.*
- Fig. 2.32 - A still image from an anime-style pre-rendered cutscene from the JRPG *Cosmic Fantasy 4.*
- Fig. 2.33 - MIDI Import into Sibelius of ‘Sunny Day’ from *The Elder Scrolls II: Daggerfall* by Eric Heberling.
- Fig. 2.34 - Transcription of “Stealth in the Bandit Camp” from *Baldur’s Gate* by Michael Hoenig.
- Fig. 2.35 - Transcription of “Fields of Time – Home” from *Chrono Cross* by Yasunori Mitsuda. Credit given to Will Sirota of RPG Gamer for his work on the ccover.mid file.
- Fig. 2.36 - An artistic impression of the absurdist city of “Sigil” – the main locale from the WRPG *Planescape: Torment.* Credit to Sean McGovern of the website Power Score.
- Fig. 2.37 - Short Score transcription of “Hrothgar’s Home” from *Icwind Dale* by Jeremy Soule.

CHAPTER 3: A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN FANTASY CRPGS – THE MODERN AGE

- Fig. 3.1 – ‘To Zanarkand’ from *Final Fantasy X* by Nobuo Uematsu.
- Fig. 3.2 - Transcription of bars 2 – 9 of “Battle Theme” from *Golden Sun* by Motoi Sakuraba. Credit to the MIDI file developed by JeffreyAtW on vgmusic.com.

- Fig. 3.3 - Bars 1 – 28 from the score for “The Demise of the Zephyr” from *Arcanum: Of Steamworks & Magick Obscura* by Ben Houge.
- Fig. 3.4 and 3.5 – The character Yuna in *Final Fantasy X* and *X-2* respectively showing the differences in costume-style with the pop-culture influences more obvious in *FFX-2* – Fig. 3.5 taken from the website [ffotaku](http://ffotaku.com).
- Fig. 3.6 – The beginning of the first section of the credits to *Eternal Sonata* listing the pianist (Stanislav Bunin) and composer (Motoi Sakuraba) first to showcase their significance.
- Fig. 3.7 - Transcription of “The Beginning” from *Demon’s Souls* by Shunsuke Kida - Credit given to Mark Andrews for his piano arrangement on Gamesheetmusic.com.
- Fig. 3.8 – Reduction of ‘Ruins of Ostagar’ from *Dragon Age: Origins* by Inon Zur, showcasing a decidedly thematic cue with distinct moments of chromaticism both melodically and harmonically.
- Fig. 3.9 – Piano reduction of the string ostinato that underpins much of the battle theme (‘Blinded by Light’) in *Final Fantasy XIII* by Masashi Hamauzu showcasing the ‘interesting harmonic language’ he describes.
- Fig. 3.10 – The Studio Ghibli animated art-style found in *Ni No Kuni: Dominion of the Dark Djinn* for the Nintendo DS – Taken from Wikipedia.
- Fig. 3.11 – Panoramic screenshot from the opening to *Skyrim*.
- Fig. 3.12 – Screenshots from the openings to *The Banner Saga* showing the Nordic aesthetic influence.
- Fig. 3.13 - Official Transcription of “Maker” from *Dragon Age: Inquisition* by Raney Shockne and transcribed by Patti Rudisill.
- Fig. 3.14 - Musical inspiration used within the design of the character “King Conga” from *Crypt of the NecroDancer*.
- Fig. 3.15 – Screenshot of *Crypt of the Necrodancer* with the shopkeeper singing on the right-hand side of the screen. At the bottom either side of the pixelated heart are the beats to the musical cue playing.
- Fig. 3.16 - Transcription of ‘Once Upon a Time’ from *Undertale* by Toby Fox.
- Fig. 3.17 - The introductory line to the first trailer of *Final Fantasy Versus XIII* – later *Final Fantasy XV*.
- Fig. 3.18 – Transcription of the initial woodwind melody heard in both ‘Mead, Gold & Blood’ from *Divinity: Original Sin II* by Kirill Pokrovsky and ‘Drink Up, There’s More!’ from *The Witcher 3* by Percival.
- Fig. 3.19 – Screenshot of *Octopath Traveler* showing the “HD-2D” graphics described by the developers.
- Table 3.1 – Chatman’s “Narrative Components” compared against Phillips’ “Music Needs”.
- Table 3.2 – Proposed Track Types for CRPGs.

CHAPTER 4: MUSIC IN SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY JAPANESE RPGS

- Fig. 4.1 – Screen capture of the opening of the kissing scene found in *Final Fantasy X*.
- Fig. 4.2 – A still image from the opening titles to *Astro Boy*.
- Fig. 4.3 – A still image from the opening titles to *Space Battleship Yamato*.
- Fig. 4.4 – A promotional poster for *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* – taken from nanime.yt.

- Fig. 4.5 – Transcription of ‘The Days Long Gone’ from *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* by Joe Hisaishi.
- Fig. 4.6 – A still image from the opening titles to *Dragon Ball*.
- Fig. 4.7 – Transcription of the main theme to *Dragon Ball* by Shunsuke Kikuchi.
- Fig. 4.8 – Transcription of ‘I, Shinji’ from *Neon Genesis Evangelion* by Shiro Sagisu.
- Fig. 4.9 – Promotional Poster for *Mononokehime* [Princess Mononoke] – taken from rialto.co.nz.
- Fig. 4.10 – Transcription of the opening five bars to “The Legend of Ashitaka” from *Princess Mononoke* composed by Joe Hisaishi.
- Table 4.1 – The proposed ‘dimensions’ by Delsing et al., (2008, p. 116) with their corresponding musical styles.
- Table 4.2 – Examples of Sci-Fi Tropes Found in Fantasy JRPGs.
- Table 4.3 – Examples of cues found in JRPGs that match various international styles of music.
- Table 4.4 – Proposed list of ‘Templates’ found in JRPGs and how they fit into the proposed archetypes.
- Table 4.5 – Table of cues found in JRPGs to match the proposed 17 ‘templates’.

CHAPTER 5: MUSIC IN SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY WESTERN RPGS

- Fig. 5.1 – The Back Cover from the Box Art to the WRPg Baldur’s Gate – taken from *MobyGames.com*.
- Fig. 5.2 – Screenshot of a forest in the first area of *Ultima VIII* where an example of Vugrinec’s ambient soundtrack is heard.
- Fig. 5.3 – Transcription of bars 1 – 13 of “City of Neverwinter” from *Neverwinter Nights* by Jeremy Soule.
- Fig. 5.4 – Screenshot of the barracks – the first area of *Neverwinter Nights*.
- Table 5.1 - Timbral Similarities between *The Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky and *The Planets* by Holst.
- Table 5.2 – Three uses of music within fantasy literature found in video games.
- Table 5.3 – Examples of cues found in JRPGs that match various international styles of music.
- Table 5.4 – Proposed list of ‘Templates’ found in WRPgs and how they fit into the proposed archetypes.
- Table 5.5 - Table of cues found in WRPgs to match the proposed 11 ‘templates’.

CHAPTER 6: THE ALLURE OF THE JRPG SOUNDTRACK IN VIDEO GAME MUSIC CONCERTS

- Fig. 6.1 – The Poster for the first “Family Classic Concert” in which the music to *Dragon Quest* was performed - *Image taken from sugimania.com*.
- Fig. 6.2 – Front Cover to the CD recording of “20020220 - Music from Final Fantasy” – *Image taken from Amazon.co.uk*.
- Fig. 6.3 – Poster for “A Night in Fantasia 2007” performed by the Eminence Symphony Orchestra – *Image taken from <https://blog.goo.ne.jp/dekubar/m/200702>*.
- Fig. 6.4 – The “Video Games Live” Logo – *Image taken from videogameslive.com*.

- Fig. 6.5 – “Play! – A Video Game Symphony” Poster – *Image taken from behance.net.*
- Fig. 6.6 – “Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy” Logo – *Image taken from ffdistantworlds.com.*
- Fig. 6.7 – The Video Game Orchestra Logo – *Image taken from wordpress.com.*
- Fig. 6.8 – “The Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddesses” Logo – *Image taken from wordpress.com.*
- Fig. 6.9 – Photo of Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy with a high-definition display showcasing a cutscene from *Final Fantasy X* – *Image taken from recording on YouTube.*
- Fig. 6.10 – No. of tracks used within video game music concerts by ludic genre.
- Fig. 6.11 – JRPG tracks by type.
- Fig. 6.12 – Aerith of *Final Fantasy VII* in the opening cutscene.
- Fig. 6.13 – Aerith of *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* shown in the opening cutscene.
- Table 6.1 - List of the top 15 best-selling video games up until February 2015.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

- Fig. 7.1 – Screenshot of Cloud from *Final Fantasy VII* fighting Shinra Guards.
- Fig. 7.2 – Screenshot of Cloud from *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* fighting Shinra guards.
- Fig. 7.3 – Image of Morrigan from the *Dragon Age* series – *Image taken from dragonage.wikia.com.*
- Fig. 7.4 – Image of Tifa from the *Final Fantasy VII* series – *Image taken from selectgame.com.br*

AUDIO TRACKS OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES USED

Notes

Due to licensing issues, it was not possible to upload the audio files of each cue referenced in this thesis. Consequently, the decision was made to provide a list of reference information for the official soundtrack versions of each of these cues where these exist. Additionally, links to YouTube videos of these cues are provided in order to allow quick access to the audio of these cues. All hyperlinks were accessed 10 July 2021.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

- None used.

CHAPTER 2: A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN FANTASY CRPGS – WORKING TOWARDS COHERENCE

- **Track 2.01 (#1) – ‘Main Title Motif’ from *The Black Onyx* by Tokuhiko Uwabo**
 - Playthrough Video: <https://youtu.be/364J35Sk3zM>
- **Track 2.02 (#2) – ‘Main Theme’ (Overture March) to *Dragon Quest* by Koichi Sugiyama**
 - Ripped Audio from Emulated Version: <https://www.woodus.com/den/music/nsf.php>
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/jLUDMrmjgiQ>
- **Track 2.03 (#3) – ‘Opening Theme’ to *Final Fantasy* by Nobuo Uematsu**
 - Ripped Audio from Emulated Version: <https://www.woodus.com/den/music/nsf.php>
 - YouTube Link to Audio: https://youtu.be/d9J91NDX_HI
- **Track 2.04 (#4) – ‘Title’ to *Miracle Warriors: Seal of the Dark Lord* on Sega Master System**
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/LP0A79p4drc>
- **Track 2.05 (#5) – ‘Title’ to *Haja no Fūin (Miracle Warriors: Seal of the Dark Lord)* on the NES**
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/O3X023ZjWz0>
- **Track 2.06 (#6) – ‘Feena’s Theme’ from *Ys* composed by Yuzo Koshiro and Mieko Ishikawa**
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/ly8DsJevdDI>
- **Track 2.07 (#7) – ‘Main Title’ to *Phantasy Star* by Tokuhiko Uwabo**
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/qJaw3II0gnQ>
- **Track 2.08 (#8) – ‘Theme of Love’ from *Final Fantasy IV* by Nobuo Uematsu**

Uematsu, Nobuo. *Final Fantasy IV: Original Sound Version*. [Tokyo, Japan]: SquareSoft, 1991.

 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/m4l3Y30Ua8g>

- **Track 2.09 (#9) – ‘Dear Friends’ from *Final Fantasy V* by Nobuo Uematsu**
Uematsu, Nobuo. *Final Fantasy V: Original Sound Version*. [Japan]: NTT Publishing Co., Ltd, 1992.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/l7kKDZei4s4>
- **Track 2.10 (#10) – ‘Fear of the Heavens’ from *Secret of Mana* by Hiroki Kikuta**
Kikuta, Hiroki. *Seiken Densetsu 2: Original Sound Version*. [Japan]: NTT Publishing Co., Ltd, 1993.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: https://youtu.be/T6YAiLHXw_c
- **Track 2.11 (#11) – ‘Terra’s Theme’ from *Final Fantasy VI* by Nobuo Uematsu**
Uematsu, Nobuo. *Final Fantasy VI: Original Sound Version*. [Japan]: NTT Publishing Co., Ltd, 1994.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: https://youtu.be/a6t_uyg_pF8
- **Track 2.12 (#12) – ‘Adventure Road’ from *Lunar: Eternal Blue* by Noriyuki Iwadare**
Iwadare, Noriyuki. *Lunar – Eternal Blue: Original Soundtrack*. [Japan]: Toshiba EMI Ltd, 1995.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/hfLH4uRCung>
- **Track 2.13 (#13) – ‘Larpa’ from *Lunar: Eternal Blue* by Noriyuki Iwadare**
Iwadare, Noriyuki. *Lunar – Eternal Blue: Original Soundtrack*. [Japan]: Toshiba EMI Ltd, 1995.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/ILjmFP-rw2Y>
- **Track 2.14 (#14) – ‘Morning Sunlight’ from *Chrono Trigger* by Yasunori Mitsuda**
Mitsuda, Yasunori. *Chrono Trigger: Music from Video Game, Official Sound Version*. [Japan]: Polystar, 1996.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/X5nN0calkss>
- **Track 2.15 (#15) – ‘Lonely Halls’ from *Secret of Evermore* by Jeremy Soule**
 - YouTube Link to Audio: https://youtu.be/khcU2_TauZs
- **Track 2.16 (#16) – ‘Take Up the Cross’ from *Tales of Phantasia* by Motoi Sakuraba**
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/LI7aFd8c6jk>
- **Track 2.17 (#17) – ‘Sunny Day’ from *The Elder Scrolls II: Daggerfall* by Eric Heberling**
 - Link to Heberling’s Official Website: <http://www.heberlingmusic.com/>
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/l2u9F7z6Nzk>
- **Track 2.18 (#18) – ‘Aerith’s Theme’ from *Final Fantasy VII* by Nobuo Uematsu**
Uematsu, Nobuo. *Final Fantasy VII: Original Sound Track*. [Japan]: DigiCube, 1997.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/flqKWlkm2-g>
- **Track 2.19 (#19) – ‘One Winged Angel’ from *Final Fantasy VII* by Nobuo Uematsu**
Uematsu, Nobuo. *Final Fantasy VII: Original Sound Track*. [Japan]: DigiCube, 1997.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/qDD-iYkHBhc>

- **Track 2.20 (#20) – ‘Stealth in the Bandit Camp’ from *Baldur’s Gate* by Michael Hoenig**
Hoenig, Michale. *Baldur’s Gate: The Original Saga Soundtrack*. [U.S.]: Interplay Entertainment, 2000.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/FOPngY7LagA>
- **Track 2.21 (#21) – ‘Fields of Time – Home’ from *Chrono Cross* by Yasunori Mitsuda**
Mitsuda, Yasunori. *Chrono Cross Original Soundtrack*. [Japan]: DigiCube, 1999.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/4ek1LMisj1s>
- **Track 2.22 (#22) – ‘Hrothgar’s Home’ from *Icwind Dale* by Jeremy Soule.**
Soule, Jeremy. *Icwind Dale*. [U.S.]: Interplay Entertainment, 2000.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: https://youtu.be/sft_0GbxDk

CHAPTER 3: A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN FANTASY CRPGS – THE MODERN AGE

- **Track 3.01 (#23) – ‘To Zanarkand’ from *Final Fantasy X* by Nobuo Uematsu**
Uematsu, Nobuo; Nakano, Junya; Hamauzu, Masashi. *Final Fantasy X: Original Soundtrack*. [Japan]: DigiCube, 2001.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: https://youtu.be/5IP_anjF6rA
- **Track 3.02 (#24) – ‘Battle Theme’ from *Golden Sun* by Motoi Sakuraba**
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/19ZdAZO9FvU>
- **Track 3.03 (#25) – ‘The Demise of the Zephyr’ from *Arcanum: Of Steamworks & Magick Obscura* by Ben Houge**
Houge, Ben. *Arcanum: Of Steamworks & Magick Obscura Original Computer Game Soundtrack*. [Digital]: Sierra, 2000.
 - Link to Ben Houge Website: <http://benhouge.com/arcanumscores.html>
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/pb9HB3Hb1b0>
- **Track 3.04 (#26) – ‘The Beginning’ from *Demon’s Souls* by Shunsuke Kida**
Kida, Shunsuke. *Demon’s Souls: Original Soundtrack*. [U.S.]: Atlus U.S.A., 2009.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/kc8pse0w9nk>
- **Track 3.05 (#27) – ‘Ruins of Ostagar’ from *Dragon Age: Origins* by Inon Zur**
Zur, Inon. *Dragon Age: Origins Original Videogame Score*. [U.S.]: E.A.R.S., 2009.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/Jl-54S1Pdis>
- **Track 3.06 (#28) – ‘Blinded by Light’ from *Final Fantasy XIII* by Masashi Hamauzu**
Hamauzu, Masashi. *Final Fantasy XIII Original Soundtrack*. [Japan]@ Square Enix Co., Ltd., 2010.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/xfu0XBf8kmk>

- **Track 3.07 (#29) – ‘Maker’ from *Dragon Age: Inquisition* by Raney Shockne & transcribed by Patti Rudisill**
Morris, Trevor; Reedy, Ted. *Dragon Age: Inquisition: Original Soundtrack*. [Digital]: E.A.R.S., 2014.
○ YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/-7UjBvP4tLo>
- **Track 3.08 (#30) – ‘Eora’ from *Pillars of Eternity* by Justin Bell**
Bell, Justin. *Pillars of Eternity Soundtrack CD*. [U.S.]: Obsidian Entertainment, 2015.
○ YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/e45nCFXiSlk>
- **Track 3.09 (#31) – ‘Once Upon a Time’ from *Undertale* by Toby Fox**
Fox, Toby. *Undertale*. [Digital]: Bancamp, 2015.
○ YouTube Link to Audio: https://youtu.be/s7RRgF5Ve_E
- **Track 3.10 (#32) – ‘Mead, Gold & Blood’ from *Divinity: Original Sin II* by Borislav Slavov**
Slavov, Borislav. *Divinity: Original Sin II Original Soundtrack*. [Digital]: Larian Studios, 2017.
○ YouTube Link to Audio: https://youtu.be/4_ANxTOG_Xk
- **Track 3.11 (#33) – ‘Drink Up, There’s More!’ from *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* by Percival Przybyłowicz, Marcin; Stroinski, Mikolai; Percival. Wiedźmin 3: Dzikie Gon Ścieżka Dźwiękowa. [Poland]: CD Projekt RED, 2015.**
○ YouTube Link to Audio: https://youtu.be/vMxo_3oHULE
- **Track 3.12 (#34) – ‘Aerith’s Theme – Home Again’ from *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* by Nobuo Uematsu & arranged by Yoshinori Nakamura.**
Uematsu, Nobuo; Hamauzu, Masashi; Suzuki, Mitsuto. *Final Fantasy VII: Remake Original Soundtrack*. [Japan]: Square Enix Co., Ltd., 2020.
○ YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/dEZre1odTxA>

CHAPTER 4: MUSIC IN SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY JAPANESE RPGS

- **Track 4.01 (#35) – ‘The Days Long Gone’ from *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* by Joe Hisaishi**
Hisaishi, Joe. *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind Symphony: The Legend of Wind*. [Japan]: Animage, 1984.
○ YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/RzL41SH0S48>
- **Track 4.02 (#36) – ‘I, Shinji’ from *Neon Genesis Evangelion* by Shiro Sagisu**
Sagisu, Shiro. *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. [Japan]: King Record Co., 1995.
○ YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/8S2qkmO1irk>
- **Track 4.03 (#37) – ‘Makafushigi Adventure’ from *Dragon Ball* by Shunsuke Kikuchi**
Kikuchi, Shunsuke. *Dragon Ball*. [Japan]: Columbia Records of Japan, 1986.
○ YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/FJqGirLjQn4>

- **Track 4.04 (#38) – ‘The Legend of Ashitaka’ from *Princess Mononoke* composed by Joe Hisaishi**
Hisaishi, Joe. *Princess Mononoke Soundtrack*. [Japan]: Tokuma Japan Communications, 1997.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/1L3bkiwU5XQ>

CHAPTER 5: MUSIC IN SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY WESTERN RPGS

- **Track 5.01 (#39) – ‘City of Neverwinter’ from *Neverwinter Nights* by Jeremy Soule**
Soule, Jeremy. *Neverwinter Nights Original Soundtrack*. [U.S.]: Atari, 2002.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: https://youtu.be/WnTWJFhLX_M

CHAPTER 6: THE ALLURE OF THE JRPG SOUNDTRACK IN VIDEO GAME MUSIC CONCERTS

- None used.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

- None used.

APPENDICES

- **Track 8.01 (#40) – ‘Reign of the Septims’ from *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* by Jeremy Soule**
Soule, Jeremy. *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion Original Soundtrack*. [Digital]: DirectSong, 2006.
 - YouTube Link to Audio: <https://youtu.be/xLhUGq1nhdU>

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foreword

My introduction to video game music began with *Final Fantasy VII*. Certainly, I had played video games before then – many of them CRPGs – and enjoyed their music. However, it was in 2005 that I was introduced to this series. A friend of mine during the first year of my bachelor’s degree said, “James, you should play this game”. So that summer, I made my first ever eBay purchase and bought *Final Fantasy VII* for PC – a whole eight years after it was originally released. It was not the best-looking game I had played, nor was it particularly well optimised for PC. Yet it stuck with me in a way that few games have. The story, the FMVs and of course the music. This was the game that transformed me from liking games and their music, to being interested in it on a more active and academic level. I bought the soundtrack, I bought the sequel-film and its soundtrack and then for the next few years, sought out every other *Final Fantasy* I could get my hands on. They were great. Yet, you never forget your first and so there’s almost something prophetic that I finish this thesis with a play-through in the evenings of *Final Fantasy VII: Remake*. Cloud, Aerith (or Aeris as I knew her), Tifa and the rest – they have been my companions on a fifteen-year journey from undergraduate to doctorate. This game has been the highlight for me of my time trapped at home during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 and 2021.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to my supervisor Professor Nick Collins for treading a fine line between pushing my academic studies and respecting I have to earn a living in order to fund the PhD. To the organisers of the *Ludo* conferences – these conferences I looked forwards to so much and afterwards I felt so inspired. Thank you too, to Jennifer Smith, Barnabas Gregory Smith, Christopher Knight and Geena Brown for being part of our mad Facebook Messenger chat where we exchange random ideas because we need to vent our academic grievances and then discuss ideas. I met you all through the *Ludo* conferences and you became my best academic friends.

To the senior leadership team, other staff and students at Prudhoe Community High School; I came to this school on supply and stayed because of you and the vision that you had. You offered encouraging words of support or helped to try to share the burden of concerts or trips that I ran. Thank you for the faith you had in me.

To my housemates past and present (particularly Matthew Young and Claire Punter), thank you for putting up with my cat-like behaviour – demanding attention and then stalking off to go and write when I’d had enough. To all my Nottingham friends – particularly Paul and Katy Riordan, Chris Morral, Andy Hart and Rebecca Dickason – for disappearing up to Durham for years only to reappear in Nottingham at odd

weekends, texting you to say “I’m back, free to meet?” and you dropping everything to do so – you kept me sane.

Finally – and *most* importantly – I must thank my family. Malcolm and Allison Tate – my parents, Elspeth and Karl Huber – my sister and brother-in-law, my amazing niece Nesta (who was born during this study), my grandad who sadly passed away between submission and marking and my grandma. You truly have been the bedrock of support that I have needed to complete this.

To everybody that has helped me in writing this or to you the reader who has taken the time to read my acknowledgements, thank you and enjoy.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Contributions

Video games are a substantial sector of the contemporary entertainment industry worth \$138.7 billion in 2018 (Anderton, 2019) which is larger than both music and film combined (McIntyre, 2019; Watson, 2018). Whilst the music of video games has begun to receive deeper attention from musicologists – in a field that has been called ludomusicology (Tam, 2007)¹ – the dizzying array of both games and the music they contain requires far more scholarship than currently exists. This thesis provides a comprehensive exploration into the music of the ludic genre (Hourigan, 2005) known as a Computer Role-Playing Game (CRPG) and its two main sub-divisions: Japanese and Western Role-Playing Games (JRPGs & WRPGs). It focuses on the narrative category known as genre fiction, concentrating on fantasy fiction (Turco, 1999) and seeks to address one overall question: How do fantasy CRPG composers incorporate the variety of musical material needed to create a coherent score across the JRPG and WRPG divide?

This introductory chapter further discusses the framing of this study with its focus on three key areas:

- The influence the narrative has on the score
- The influence the ludic genre itself has on the score
- The influence that the cultural heritage of the game has on the score

A number of theories across these key areas are explored before being summarised at the end of the chapter. Additionally, evidence is also displayed within **Appendix 1.1** where I showcase a comprehensive database of CRPGs from 1997 – 2013 which details key features about these games which are then used as support throughout the rest of the thesis.

Chapters Two and Three explores the various tropes that have formed across the history of the computer role-playing game musical score using the framing established in Chapter One. The time period of this study focuses on Role-Playing Games from their earliest inception onwards to demonstrate their development and evolution up to the games released in 2020. Whilst there is not room for every game to be discussed, a representative sample is taken and justified throughout these chapters. Through interviews, composers' intentions and inspirations are highlighted to detail the various narrative and ludic points they had to adhere to in addition to the various cultural styles that have influenced their scores.

¹ Whilst Nicholas Tam is the source of the information, the portmanteau of "ludomusicology" from ludology and musicology was created by Guillaume Laroche in conversation with Tam himself (Tam, 2007).

In the fourth and fifth chapters, an analysis of the JRPG/WRPG divide is detailed based on the history in Chapters Two and Three. The narrative, ludic and cultural theories highlighted in Chapter One are shown in relation to the music found within these games. A clear musicological foundation is therefore created to explain how these disparate tracks combine to create a coherent score and a new template model is proposed at the end of each chapter as a way of satisfactorily showcasing the different types of cues found across the CRPG divide. In Chapter Six the impact that the music from CRPGs has had outside video games is addressed. Finally, Chapter Seven concludes the thesis and aims to provide a measured discussion of how the music in fantasy CRPGs is likely to evolve in the future and to highlight anything that does not fall into the models provided.

Finally, in the course of writing this thesis, it has come to my attention that some of the composers discussed have been reported as either engaging in personal misconduct, or as having made offensive statements. I acknowledge the difficulty of separating art from artist and the chosen examples are in no way an endorsement of their non-musical views.

1.2 A Coherent Score

It is logical to begin with the central term upon which the core argument of this thesis rests; that of a *coherent* score. In the Oxford dictionary, coherence is defined as being ‘connected logically’ (Hawkins, 1988, p. 91). Yet, this warrants further explanation. Here we can turn to Paul Thagard’s definition:

When we make sense of a text, picture, person, or event, we need to construct an interpretation that fits with the available information better than alternative interpretations. The best interpretation is one that provides the most coherent account of what we want to understand, considering both pieces of information that fit with each other and pieces of information that do not fit with each other (Thagard, 2000, p. 16).

If a person is to play a video game and understand its musical score, then that player must be able to take all of the information that is being outputted visually, audibly and through tactile feedback. Yet, as Thagard’s definition suggests, this sense of coherence is distinctly subjective – we must build upon information that is known to us already; something that will be discussed in Huron’s theory of expectation and Kizzire/ Ivănescu’s nostalgia theories in section 1.5.

1.3 What are Single-Player Fantasy Computer Role-Playing Games?

Various other aspects of this thesis’ title need to be addressed. The notion of a single-player fantasy computer role-playing game requires splitting into three parts:

1. The narrative structure of the game – also considered to be the genre of fiction or the environmental genre (Summers, 2011, p. 4)
2. The category of the way the video game is played or ‘ludic genre’
3. The term ‘single-player’.

1.3.1 Fantasy Fiction

The definition of fiction is simply anything that has been invented or has been imagined (Merriam-Webster, N.D.); the exact size and scope of this is irrelevant. Fantasy however, differs somewhat from mere fiction alone. This is a category of genre fiction that originated in oral traditions before becoming literature and drama obeying most or all of the following:

- The setting of the fantasy is likely to be in an imaginary world
- The fantasy will originate in some aspect from either fairy tales or heroic epics of any (number of) culture(s)
- There is some form of fulfilment of desire
- Items, creatures and events are evident that are impossible according to natural law

(Turco, 1999; Pringle, 2006; Laetz & Johnston, 2008)

The role of the fantastical has many examples across human civilization and culture. From Greek myths of *Oedipus* and *Pandora* to Chinese folklore of *the Monkey King* and *Jade Rabbit*, the fantastical has existed across human history. In more recent times, fantasy has been a genre with world-spanning cultural impact, for instance JRR Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* or JK Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series and their crossover from literature to film. Comics, Japanese anime and manga, Hollywood cinema and international video games amongst many others have all added and built upon this fictional genre creating a tapestry of themes and devices that are broader than any one person’s imagination.

1.3.2 Computer Role Playing Games (CRPGs)

A computer role-playing game is a fusion of two categories that existed for several years before their combination. We have on the one hand a specific type of video game. On the other, a specific sub-category of the umbrella term ‘role-playing game’. The notion of what exactly a role-playing game is in its widest sense was covered most notably by Joris Dorman (2006) before being refined by José P. Zagal and Sebastian Deterding in their edited book *Role-Playing Game Studies: A Transmedia Approach*. Within their introduction, they identify six forms of role-playing games:²

- Precursors – Those games that share elements of traditional RPGs but had not fulfilled all the criteria.

² Only the titles are shown in the Zagal & Deterding’s introduction – all additional description is by myself.

- TRPG – Table-Top RPGs; these games include traditional pen and paper RPGs for example *Dungeons and Dragons* along with games that use model figures such as *Warhammer 40,000*.
- CRPG – Computer Role-Playing Games; explained below.
- MORPG – Multiplayer Online RPG; these games require an internet connection to play and involve connecting to a server where other players also join such as *World of Warcraft*, *Guild Wars*.
- LARP – Live Action Role Playing Games; where players interact with other performers in a specific physical location and imbue the persona of a character of their creation. Groups include *Dagohir*, *Treasure Trap* and *Dragonbane*.
- Other – This includes cos-play, fandom and other types of RPG not able to fit into the above, for instance erotic role-play.

(Zagal & Deterding (ed.), 2018, p. 5)

This thesis will focus on CRPGs, which themselves are a genre of video game.^{3 4} Video game genres have been described by various scholars in different ways: Tim Summers (2011) uses ‘interactive genre’ whilst Ben Hourigan (2005) used ‘ludic genre’. For this thesis, ‘ludic genre’ will be used to describe this particular genre of video game as it is clearly separate to the narrative structure a game might have. A CRPG has been accepted by industry-professionals, platform-holders,⁵ game-critics, fans and academics alike to describe one particular ludic genre of video game. Whilst arguably paradoxical to non-gamers – after-all, in most games you play a role – there is a roughly accepted consensus of what a CRPG is, which I define below:

A video game in which the player takes on the role of a character – or group of characters – to fulfil a specific quest (the main-plot); most likely through a number of different locales. Through their play-through, players will likely have the opportunity to accept side-quests gaining access to more story and experience for their character(s) through which they can “level-up” - increasing statistical values in skills, attributes and equipment to become more powerful and allow further progression in the main-plot.

Over-time,⁶ the CRPG has undergone further fragmentation into multiple sub-genres which is the major focus of this thesis; however, the above definition arguably incorporates almost all of the accepted CRPGs on the market. Just as fantasy fiction has diversified, so too have CRPGs, from more traditional computer-based

³ The terms ‘computer game’ and ‘video game’ are used interchangeably in this thesis.

⁴ Additional sub-genres of CRPG not explicitly discussed in this thesis are defined by Douglas Schules, Jon Peterson and Martin Picard in their chapter ‘Single-Player Computer Role-Playing Games’ (2018, pp. 110 – 114).

⁵ The various online stores by Microsoft, Sony and Nintendo etcetera all categorise games by their ludic genre of which role-playing game (or RPG as it is inherently obvious that the RPG will be computerised) is one.

⁶ Matt Barton’s 2008 book ‘Dungeons and Desktops: The History of Computer Role-Playing Games’ – in addition to Schules, Peterson and Picard 2018 chapter – provide a useful reference into the history of the computer role-playing game.

platforms including Personal Computers (PCs) and game consoles, to handheld consoles and mobile phones. Computer role-playing games also inhabit many different narrative settings from the fantasy *Dragonstomper* to the sci-fi *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* to the time-travelling story of *Final Fantasy XIII-2* and the American Wild-West of *Wild Arms*.

This thesis examines two principal forms of CRPG:

1. **Japanese RPGs (JRPGs):**⁷

This sub-category of CRPG is more complex than its name suggests and can be split into two schools of thought: the first being literal in the sense that only CRPGs *made* in Japan qualify as being a JRPG and the second a more liberal term suggesting a particular play-style and narrative structure (Schules, Peterson, Picard, 2018). For the more liberal term, both academic and amateur forays into creating a precise definition of what a JRPG exactly is have still to settle on an agreed description, however, there are a number of accepted points:

- The term JRPG began with fans rather than with game developers as a way of distinguishing CRPGs produced in the West (which tended to be on PC) and those produced in Japan (which tended to be on console)
- JRPGs tend to use fantasy as a narrative structure
- JRPGs tend to have characters that have a set-appearance, personality and other character aspects
- JRPGs tend to have minimal customisation to gear and equipment
- JRPGs tend to constrain players in terms of the narrative usually by having a pre-determined path and narrative arc.
- Visuals, characters and world-building tend to be diverse owing to a wider narrative representation of fantasy than those games in the West.

(Schules, Peterson, Picard, 2018; Knodle, 2017; Mallindine 2016)

2. **Western RPGs (WRPGs):**

As with JRPGs, WRPGs in their simplest form are those created by game development studios in the West – most notably America and Europe. However, from a stylistic perspective, the play-style of the CRPG differs – often significantly – from their JRPG counterparts and will generally allow for more customisation of the principal character(s) that the player controls including appearance, apparel, skills and stats. The narrative structure tends to be looser than in JRPGs allowing more-decision

⁷ For further information on the history of the term, Jaymee Mallindine's 2016 article provides an in-depth historical account.

making on behalf of the player. This can sometimes lead to portions of the game being either closed-off to the player or not discovered depending on the player's actions.

Although geography will play a role in the discussion of these two forms of CRPG, this thesis will use the terms more from a stylistic point of view, rather than where only geography applies. It should be noted that JRPGs are sometimes referred to as "Eastern" or "North-East Asian" RPGs – Wikipedia uses this term, as does the game composer Winifred Phillips in her 2014 book *A Composer's Guide to Game Audio*. Nevertheless, I argue that this term has not gained very much traction and as such, poses just as much confusion as it elucidates.

It should also be clarified at this point that whilst other genres of fiction and other play-styles of game may well be found in the CRPGs referenced – for example, fantasy RPGs containing science-fiction or horror elements or RPGs having an element of shooters or real time strategy games – the main genres will be the aspect most focused upon. Finally, it also warrants mentioning that there are further sub-categories of CRPGs, depending on how combat is undertaken. Some CRPGs do it in turns – a technique harking back to tabletop board games and dice rolls – and thus are described as 'turn-based RPGs', whilst others which require constant inputs by the player are known as 'action RPGs'. There are minor differences in musical score design because of this, however, this will be covered further in the historical account of section 2.4.

1.3.3 Single-Player Video Games

Although the term 'single-player' appears somewhat obvious, it is important that this is defined. Most board games require at least two players whilst many video games are almost unique in the game-world as they can be played by a solo player. Whilst there are video games that allow for multiple players to take part in either through local (sometimes known as split-screen) play, over local area networks (LAN) or across the internet, this thesis will focus on single-player games only. Multiplayer Online RPGs in-particular, are notable computer role-playing games that will be excluded from this thesis, eliminating games such as *World of Warcraft*. This is due to several reasons but the two most applicable are listed below:

- **Story** – For MORPGs, the story is often of less importance than other game elements. Consider how Holin Lin and Chuen-Tsai Sun describe player-versus-environment (PvE)⁸ activities:

'Representative PvE activities include using hack-and-slash monsters to loot equipment and gather game currency dropped by targets; participating in quests to collect functional and decorative items, earn experience points, and level up; exploring game world environments for the purposes of enjoying landscapes and background stories; and joining dungeon teams to defeat bosses and to collect high ranking equipment and unusual pets.'

(Lin & Sun, 2015, p. 3).

⁸ As compared to PvP (Player versus Player) where the object is to best an opponent or team of opponents.

Story is mentioned only once and after several other activities. This is due to the nature of these types of games – you cannot be the solitary hero that saves the world, if there are hundreds or thousands of other players doing the exact same thing. As a consequence, music in MORPGs, tends to focus on the environment and combat⁹ rather than on how it links necessarily with the game’s story.

- **Non-playable characters (NPCs)** – MORPGs are designed to be played with other people; it is their unique selling point. By doing so, players can specialise in skills in order to form “raid parties” in order to take part in “raiding” – ‘a high-stakes, joint-task activity that requires careful coordination’ (Chen et. al, 2018). Each player’s avatar rarely has a back-story, or if they do, it is not important to the game’s overall plot. Conversely, in single-player CRPGs – particularly JRPGs as will be shown – characters are integral to the game’s story. Often these major NPCs help shape the narrative often having leitmotifs to accompany them which can be developed as their character does.

1.4 CRPG Database

It is useful at this point to showcase the wealth of CRPGs available in order to understand why the concept of coherence in their score design is as challenging as it is. To that end, I felt that there was merit in creating a database focused solely on computer role-playing games in the hope that some initial large-scale analysis could be used to reinforce the research contributions within this text. Currently, there are two main websites available – *Moby Games* and *Giant Bomb* – which are attempting to curate a complete database of video games. Both rely on inputs from a combination of staff and volunteers with only *Giant Bomb* offering an Application Programming Interface (API) that could be used to manipulate their data. Neither website however, have a comprehensive list of CRPGs available and for many instances of games listed they do not have all the corresponding fields complete. To assist and make the data open-source, a database was created of unique CRPGs released between the years 1997 and 2013. There are however, some caveats: expansions and re-releases are not listed unless they exist as a complete remake. To create this database,¹⁰ the following sources were used:

- Steam, PlayStation Store, Xbox Store, Nintendo Store
- Wikipedia, YouTube
- Moby Games, Giant Bomb
- Videogame Music and Anime Soundtrack Database (VGMdb)
- Metacritic, IGN, Gamespot, Eurogamer, PC Gamer, RPG Fan, onRPG

⁹ A case in point is *Final Fantasy XIV* – Before the official soundtrack was released, Square Enix released two EPs titled *Final Fantasy XIV Battle Tracks* and *Final Fantasy XIV Field Tracks* clearly showing their importance in game.

¹⁰ Special credit should be given to Dr Rebekah Clements from Durham University for her help with translating Japanese names that had been listed using kanji characters.

Whilst the desire was to create a database that consisted of CRPGs released up until 2020, the creation of *Steam Greenlight* posed a significant challenge. Steam is a digital distribution platform – originally for games but now also distributing other software – released by Valve Corporation in 2003. Since its inception, it has grown to become the most used digital platform for selling video games (Edwards, 2013). In 2012, Valve released ‘Steam Greenlight’ which they defined as follows:

Steam Greenlight is a system that enlists the community's help in picking some of the new games to be released on Steam. Developers post information, screenshots, and video for their game and seek a critical mass of community support in order to get selected for distribution (Valve Corporation, 2012).

With this platform released, the number of CRPGs – and video games in general – increased dramatically. As a consequence, it was felt uneconomical in the number of man-hours needed to attempt to catalogue all of these independent, smaller CRPGs and so a decision was made to narrow the scope of the database to games created between 1997 and 2013.

To quantify some of the terms used already, it is possible to extrapolate various graphs from the data provided. To begin, it is useful to understand how many CRPGs (or games with RPG elements) are released each year, as shown below in Fig. 1.1:

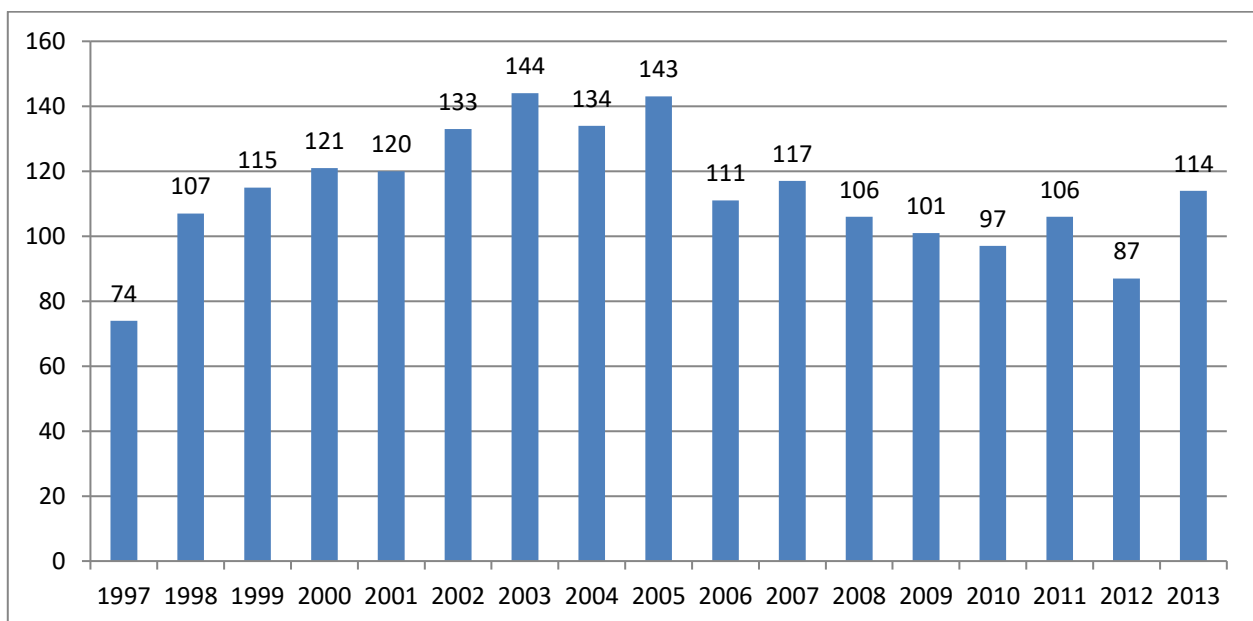


Fig. 1.1 – No. of CRPGs released per year

As can be seen, this is a sizeable ludic genre within the video games industry, with an average game release of 117 CRPGs released each year. It is essential therefore, that the music of this genre is researched in order to draw conclusions as to how composers create a coherent yet unique score amidst the vast competition

that this genre contains. The next area to be drawn attention to, is the fictional genre that the games inhabit. Whilst fantasy is typically associated with CRPGs, it is by no means the only form, shown below in Fig. 1.2:

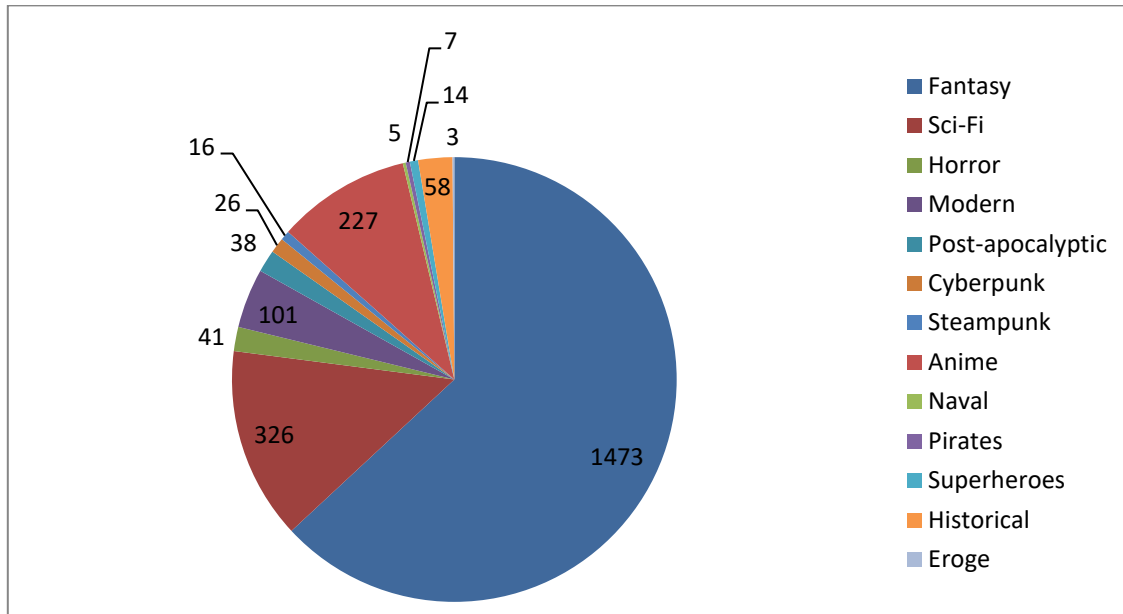


Fig. 1.2 – No. of CRPGs Inhabiting Genres of Fiction

Narrative Genre titles based on amalgamation of categories from *Moby Games* and *Giant Bomb*.

Nevertheless, as shown fantasy is clearly the dominant genre of fiction used within CRPGs. This lends further credence to the scope of this thesis due to the complexities of creating music that is coherent to the players of fantasy CRPGs. It is not unreasonable to suggest that players will have a certain aesthetic style that they expect and as suggested in the introduction, narrative is one of the three over-riding factors of music found in CRPGs. Whilst there are undeniably cross-overs in each of these categories of genre-fiction, it is still notable as to how much fantasy fiction is the prevailing choice. More will be discussed on this throughout the body of this text; however, it is worth highlighting this point here.

Data was also recorded for the origin of the game. Whilst this thesis will not use the most literal form of JRPG as purely being developed in Japan (and similarly for WRPGs), it cannot be denied that there is an overwhelming correlation. As such, Fig. 1.3 offers a stark visualisation of how dominant Japan was in the years 1997 – 2013 as a CRPG-developing nation:

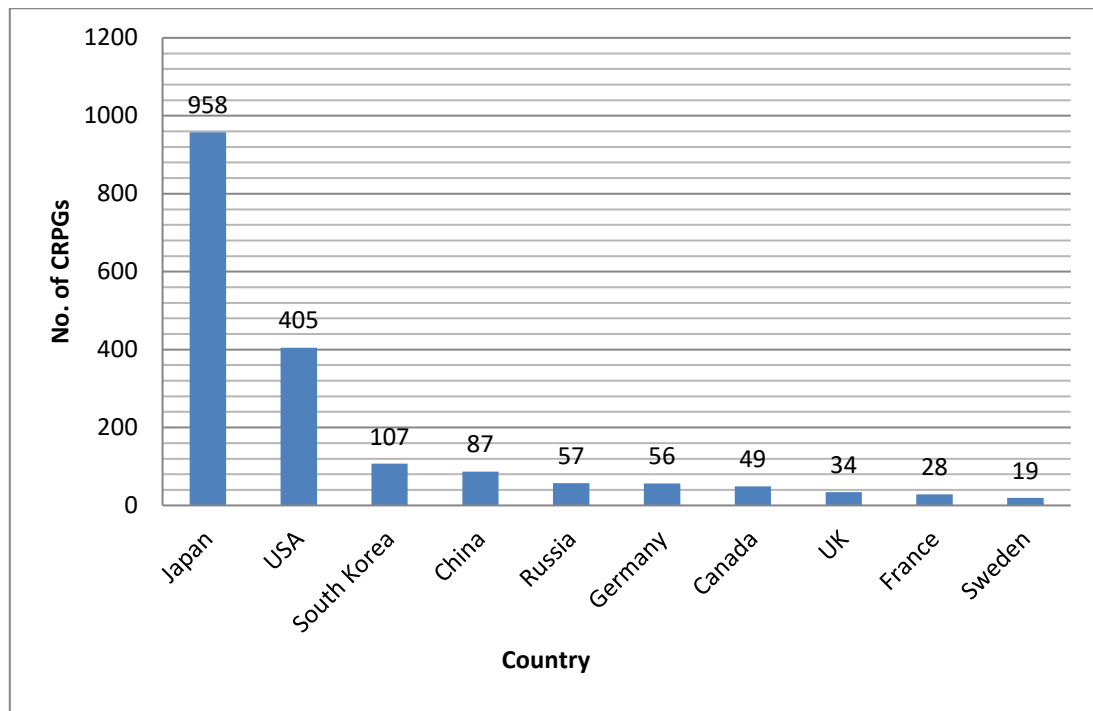


Fig. 1.3 – No. of CRPGs Released per Country

Whilst only ten countries are shown, they account for 93.2% of the CRPGs released during this time period. As such, it is even more remarkable by the number of Japanese RPGs released compared to the rest of the world – a combined total of 53.2% of the CRPGs released.

It is also worth highlighting how many of these CRPGs are serial games – i.e. belong to a series – as compared to how many games are unique intellectual properties (IPs), shown below in Fig. 1.4:

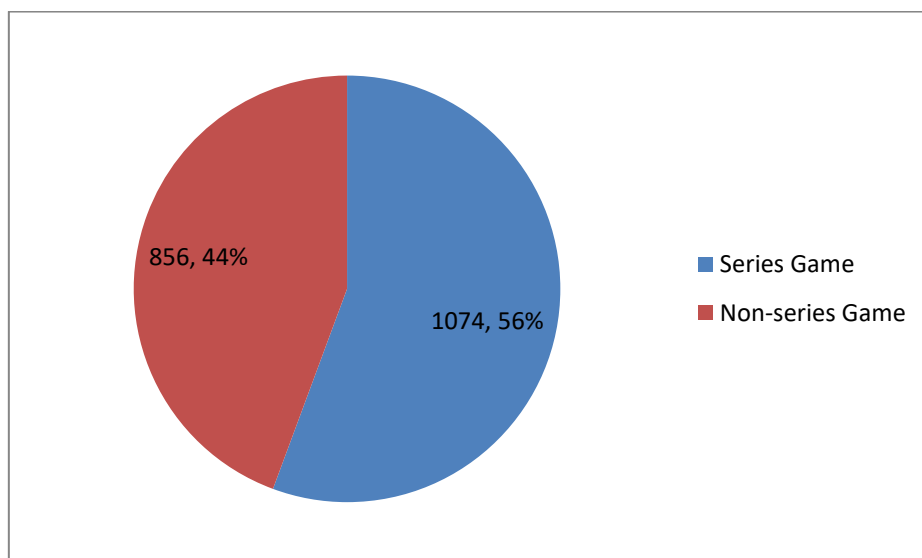


Fig. 1.4 – No. of CRPGs shown to either be unique IPs or series games

As can be seen, there is a relatively even split although serial games are more prolific. Whilst this is understandable due to companies not willing to take as many financial risks on new IPs this lends credence

to the cultural heritage of the game being another important factor in the creation of a coherent score; prior games in the series are far more likely to have an impact upon the development of the vast majority of features found in later games (of which the musical score is one). Jessica Kizzire alludes to this in her chapter “The Place I’ll Return to Someday: Musical Nostalgia in *Final Fantasy IX*” where she suggests that nostalgia – particularly in games that have a rich heritage, for instance the *Final Fantasy*, *Kingdom Hearts* or *Tales* series – ‘invokes an idealised past... thus creating a nostalgic experience in the consumer’ (Kizzire, 2014, p. 183). Andra Ivănescu agrees, stating that nostalgia games seek to relate new games to the past through appropriation and pastiche, emphasising the undertones of the genres and styles (Ivănescu, 2019, p. 16). This nostalgic feeling – particularly of the music of a video game – can be of profound importance when it comes to the score’s design.

With this quantifiable source of data, it is easier to understand how much music is being created merely for this one ludic genre, let alone other types of video game. Whilst each game referenced in the above data set belongs to the CRPG ludic genre, each game has their own unique narrative and cultural heritage and all three of these factors will influence the score’s end result.

1.5 Literature Review

Whilst this thesis is fundamentally a work of musicology or – more specifically – ludomusicology, it touches upon a variety of disciplines. Already so far in this text, narrative, ludic-genre and cultural heritage have been mentioned. Additionally, there are others factors involved including the psychology of expectation and tradition, aesthetics and even economics – smaller CRPGs will have less of a budget which may well impact upon the composer’s decisions. Nevertheless, the three key areas of the games – the narrative, ludic and cultural heritage – are arguably the most influential upon the music and will have had the greatest impact upon the coherency of scores found in both JRPGs and WRPGs. This builds upon Rod Munday’s chapter ‘Music in Video Games’ where he offers three similar headings to the ones outline above:

1. Environmental: how music supports the perception of a gameworld
2. Immersion: how music supports the player’s involvement in the game
3. Diegetic – how music supports a game narrative

(Munday, 2007, p. 52).

Here, I find that Munday’s categories overlaps somewhat, and as such, this thesis differs slightly. Instead, it uses the terms ‘**narrative**’ to which the environment or setting is a part of, as per Chatman’s theory (shown below). Immersion and diegesis links to the ‘**ludic genre**’ and finally, I introduce a separate category of the **cultural heritage** of a game which will be considered as well.

Various theories in each of these three terms must be considered; all of which will be explored below with examples of how they are used in the context of this thesis' musicology. Some will inevitably cross-over; for example, those covering culture in video games or those covering narrative within video games. However, it was felt that a certain degree of structuring enabled a clearer understanding of their impact upon this thesis within this literature review. As such, theories, articles or works have been separated into the above key areas depending on their individual leanings. By doing so, it is hoped that the current literature surrounding the question of coherence in the musical scores of CRPGs is more easily understood.

1.5.1 Narrative Theories

Several theories concerning narrative have a direct impact upon this thesis. Some pre-date video games altogether whereas some come from studying games both in the CRPG genre and wider afield. To begin however, it is essential that one narrative theory in particular is highlighted – Seymour Benjamin Chatman's model of the components of a narrative.

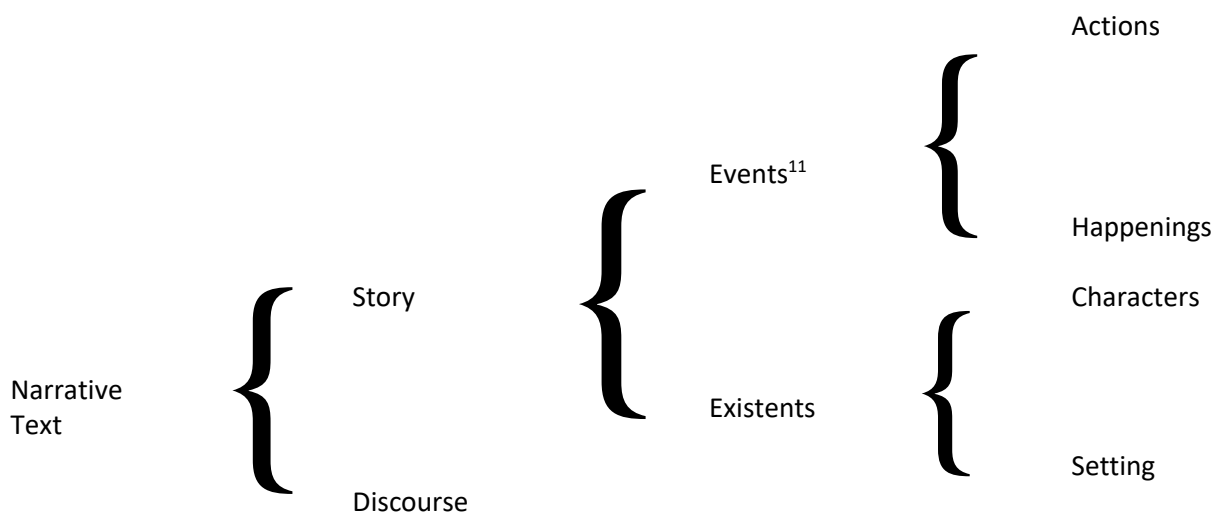


Fig. 1.5 – Chatman's Model of the Components of a Narrative

The coherency of a game – and by extension – its score, owes much to its narrative. Chatman's model of the components of a narrative in his book *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1980, p. 19) is depicted above in Fig. 1.5. According to Chatman, the "discourse" is the way in which the content is communicated. For video games, and particularly CRPGs, this is done either through game-play, cutscenes, text, dialogue, graphics, audio or kinetic feedback (for example the controller's vibration). What this thesis is concerned with, however is the story and its relationship to the music used within the game. In Tim Summers' *Playing the Tune: Video Game Music, Gamers, and Genre* (2011), he suggests that in addition to the "interactive genre" (see above) there is also the "environmental genre" which he defines as 'the setting of

¹¹ Actions and happenings are explained by Chatman in his book in quite an abstract way. For clarity, it is my understanding that actions are the scene-by-scene events whereas the happenings are what results of these actions, for example the action of a fight scene leads to the happening of the character gaining enough experience to level up and access the next area of the game.

the game'. Summers' proposal is apt; whilst from Chatman's narrative perspective the setting is just one component on the far side of the model, the setting plays an important role in how choices of music are made. Other elements however, will also play a part.

It can be argued that the vast majority of narratives within CRPGs fall into one model; the American scholar Joseph Campbell's monomyth titled the "Hero's Journey".¹² In this theory – which itself is built upon the foundations laid down by the Russian scholar Vladimir Propp – Campbell suggests that numerous myths and stories from different cultures and times share the same fundamental principles. In Campbell's book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (2008) originally published in 1949, he argues that there is a template for tales that involve a hero who goes on an adventure and after overcoming various obstacles, challenges and temptations, wins a victory and returns home changed or transformed. Campbell suggested that there are seventeen steps to this journey, though several notable scholars – David Adams Leeming (1998), Phil Cousineau (2003) and Christopher Vogler (2007) have since adapted the theory to contain a condensed number. Nevertheless, all of these scholars split the template into three acts. Below is Vogler's interpretation, chosen due to its popularity and arguably more straight-forward language and where necessary, I have provided additional explanation in italics:

- **Act 1: Departure**

1. Ordinary World
2. Call to Adventure – *A sign/event that forces the hero to undergo the quest*
3. Refusal of the Call – *Often an event that suggests to the hero the difficulty in the quest*
4. Meeting with the Mentor – *A teacher like figure appears in the story*
5. Crossing the First Threshold – *A notable end-of-exposition event*

- **Act 2: Initiation**

6. Tests, Allies and Enemies
7. Approach to the Inmost Cave – *The lead up to the final confrontation*
8. The Ordeal – *A climactic battle/act that forces the hero to confront the person/event that started the adventure*
9. Reward – *A medal, knowledge, acceptance etcetera.; something the hero desires.*

- **Act 3: Return**

10. The Road Back – *A return to the Ordinary World*
11. The Resurrection – *Often the story contains one more unexpected ordeal resulting in the hero transforming from what they were to a purer version of who they are.*
12. Return with the Elixir – *A medal, knowledge, acceptance etcetera; something the hero can use to improve the Ordinary World.*

¹² There are of course exceptions to this – an early example being *Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar*.

Amongst popular culture of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century there are numerous examples of fiction that fall neatly within this template, for example *Star Wars*, *The Lord of the Rings* or *Harry Potter*. Video games also fall into this with most placing the player-controlled character(s) as the principal protagonist(s). Let us take the narrative to *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope* (dir. Lucas, 1977) and the JRPG *Final Fantasy X* as way of introducing how their stories – based on the “Hero’s Journey” – affects the music used to accompany them, as shown below in table 1.1:

Hero’s Journey Structure (Vogler)	Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope	Final Fantasy X
Ordinary World	Luke on Tatooine.	Tidus in high-tech city of Zanarkand
Call to Adventure	Discovers hologram from Princess Leia in the body of the droid R2-D2.	After Zanarkand is attacked by “Sin”, Tidus wakes up 1,000 years in future. Learns about pilgrimage by Yuna to obtain the “Final Aeon” and defeat Sin.
Refusal of the Call	States that he has to stay to help aunt and uncle.	<This stage happens out of order> Tidus refuses to allow Yuna to use Final Aeon as would result in her death.
Meeting the Mentor	Luke meets Obi Wan Kenobi	Tidus meets Auron.
Crossing the First Threshold	Luke leaves home to Mos Eisley spaceport. Luke out of element.	Tidus becomes Yuna’s guardian.
Tests, Allies and Enemies	Gains Han Solo and Chewbacca as allies. Stormtroopers try to stop them as they leave to fly to Alderaan.	Meets additional ally in Riku. Many fights against “Sinspawn”. Meets antagonist Seymour Guado.
Approach to the Inmost Cave	Obi Wan teaches Luke to wield a lightsabre. Captured by Death Star’s tractor beam and are brought on board.	Arrival at the ruins of Zanarkand.
The Ordeal	Rescue of Princess Leia from imprisonment. Obi Wan dies in duel with Darth Vader.	Duel with Yunalesca.
Reward/Seizing the Sword	Able to join Rebel Fleet as a pilot.	Learns about the history of “Sin” and by doing so, the means to defeat it.
The Road Back	Luke is aiming for a world without the Empire. As such, this means the destruction of the Death Star.	Travels to find Yu Yevon.
The Resurrection	Luke undergoes the change of trusting in the Force to take the final shot to destroy the Death Star.	Tidus ends “Sin” constant rebirth and by doing so accepts his fate that he is but a dream in this world of the future.
Return with the Elixir	Victory in this battle against the Empire; a morale boost for the rebellion and the destruction of the Empire’s super-weapon.	With that acceptance he allows himself to fade out of existence.

Table 1.1 – Summary of the stories of *Star Wars: Episode IV* and *Final Fantasy* and their relation to “The Hero’s Journey” narrative structure. The differences in shading highlight the three acts.

Sharon Sherman suggests that the Hero’s Journey is:

...so significant that popular culture creators from Disney to George Lucas to Steven Spielberg to Nintendo game producers recreate the themes most important to them from their own remembered childhood pasts and, at the same time, create an intertextual framework instantly recognized and reinforced by children on a global scale never dreamt of by historic-geographic research (Sherman, 1997).

When it comes to the music that accompanies both forms of audio-visual entertainment, again similarities occur. Let us first consider the choice of music based on the narrative.¹³

Character themes coincide with Campbell's 'Allies and Enemies'. Action music occurs alongside 'The Ordeal'. The ordinary world would have more peaceful music whilst 'meeting the mentor' might have a more ambiguous or mystical type sonority. Take for example the opening scene of *Harry Potter & The Philosopher's Stone* (dir. Columbus, 2001) which sees Harry's mentor Dumbledore arrive to deliver Harry to his aunt and uncle. The music – composed by John Williams – features tremolo strings, an often-ambiguous tonality due to the chromaticism found in its ascending and descending scalar runs and the mystical twinkle of a celeste in the background.¹⁴ This music clearly denotes Dumbledore's mysticism and magic, coinciding with the action that is happening on screen as Harry's guardian who would become his mentor. In all these examples, the *narrative text* dictates the type of cues that need to be heard. The style of the music however, is different. Fast, energetic music can be played by an orchestra, or a heavy-metal band. Calm, relaxing music could be played by a string-quartet in a Western Classical style, or it could be played by a solo shakuhachi using the pentatonic scale. Character themes need context; do they have a tragic back-story or have ulterior motives? Would they suit jazz, or a church organ playing a pastiche on Baroque music for instance? All of this falls under the *existents* section of Chatman's model.

Whilst Chatman and Campbell's narrative theories will be essential in addressing the question of coherency within CRPG scores, there are several pieces of video game scholarship that have addressed narrative in their study. Both Petri Lankoski (2004) and Daniel Punday (2005) discuss various features of narrative that make up RPGs. In Lankoski's chapter 'Character Design Fundamentals for Role-Playing Games' he discusses the importance of characters upon a game's narrative, stating in reference to RPGs that 'well defined characters that are consistently communicated to players are an important ingredient in a potentially successful game' (Lankoski, 2004, p. 139). The use of characters – both the main character(s) and other prominent party members are crucial in RPGs; particularly as they almost always help advance the narrative. These are affected by culture: the culture of in-game and of course the cultural influences of their real-world character designers. Lankoski draws upon sources from a wide-variety of backgrounds – not least

¹³ The tension between narrative and gameplay was a major focus of early video game studies in papers by Jesper Juul (2001; 2005), Marie Ryan (2001), Markku Eskelinen (2001), Mark Barrett (1997), etcetera. This will be further discussed below.

¹⁴ Jamie Webster's PhD thesis (2009) on music and magic in Harry Potter discusses the use of this further.

scriptwriting – in order to build an argument for the importance of well-written characters. Whilst he does not describe CRPGs within his chapter, the ideas and arguments within it are equally applicable and provide some useful foundations upon which this thesis will draw; not least of how the physio and psychological attributes of characters is built upon when it comes to the use of leitmotifs in a videogame's soundtrack.

Margo Buchanan-Oliver and Yuri Seo's 2012 paper also draws similar conclusions to the importance of characters in a narrative. They investigated at the real-time strategy (RTS) game *Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos* and its relationship between play and story-telling. Like many JRPGs of the time, its plot was spaced out as cutscenes¹⁵ between missions with objectives in-game being more generic. These missions are similar to the exploration and general non-boss related combat of JRPGs and so offer us a useful comparison. What is especially interesting however, is when we consider that *Warcraft III* stands as a pseudo-prequel to the MMORPG *World of Warcraft*. By doing so, we can compare the descriptions of a JRPG-like predecessor (in terms of narrative) with a WRPG-like successor. Within their paper, Buchanan-Oliver and Seo interview a number of players of the game. One – referenced only as 'Immdrag' – suggests that although the story was not particularly ground-breaking, they particularly enjoyed the development of the game's principal characters in addition to other aspects of the game's narrative. Despite the story's relative simplicity, this relationship to the game's character was due to Immdrag – and others – taking an active part in it (in the case of an RTS, ordering specific troops around the battlefield). What this study suggests, is that by taking an active role in a story, players will engage far more with what is happening. This has a lot of repercussions when it comes to CRPGs as story is such a substantial part of the product. Consequently, within their music links can be made to the importance of character themes through the components of a narrative that Chatman suggests.

Moving from the broader overview of the narratives in video games to scholarship on how narrative affects video game *music*, we can turn to Zach Whalen (2004). His article "Play Along – An Approach to Videogame Music" compares film music to video game music and how the narrative of the game might impact upon the music's role. He suggests the use of pre-established tropes – born from 'early cartoon music and horror films' (ibid) – is what video game music relies upon. Amongst his discussions, he references the use of music in cutscenes and the differences between game music and game 'sound'. The case studies of games he chooses are interesting: *Super Mario Bros*, *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* and *Silent Hill*. Whilst from different ludic genres, *Ocarina of Time* and *Silent Hill* are from the late 1990s and *Super Mario Bros* and *Ocarina of Time* are not only developed and produced by Nintendo but they are also composed by the same composer – Koji Kondo, leading to quite a narrow array of choices. Of these, *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* is perhaps the most like a CRPG and so his research does bear a relationship to this study. Within his article he also touches upon both story genre and gameplay type although acknowledges that

¹⁵ Cutscenes are generally non-interactive segments of the game (similar to short films) that develop the storyline. These are typically found at the end of a section of the game once various game-play tasks have been completed.

games are unlikely to be completely pigeon-holed into only one ludic genre or fiction style. What makes Whalen's essay important to this study however, is his identification of generic cue types found in video games and their use in the overall narrative of the game experience. Linking to cartoon music (as I identify that JRPGs make use of anime music in Chapter Four), we are introduced to cue archetypes such as the 'Game-Over', the 'Overworld Theme' (and corresponding 'Underworld'), area themes such as religious areas, character themes, combat music and more. These early cue archetypes will be of particular importance as I seek to identify a new model of cue archetypes in both JRPGs and WRPGs.

Ludomusicology scholarship has also included the use of characters as an essential part of a game's narrative. William Cheng's chapter 'How Celes Sang' covers a formal musical analysis to the opera scene found in *Final Fantasy VI*. Here, Cheng describes the context of the music as much from the character's emotional state as he does from the happenings and events described by Chatman suggesting that when music is influenced by the 'narrative', that events and setting are not the only factors discussed. Kevin Courcelle's 2015 Masters dissertation 'Techniques D'écritures Musicales dans le JRPG: Exemples de Final Fantasy VII et Final Fantasy VIII'¹⁶ is another example. Here, Courcelle discusses the types of music written for JRPGs using *Final Fantasy VII* and *VIII*. The discussion of leitmotifs as significant in *Final Fantasy VII* due to the interleaving story-lines of the different characters in the game, whereas in *Final Fantasy VIII*, this is replaced in favour of seeking to represent the events that the story portrays. Courcelle's paper suggests that even within a famous JRPG series like *Final Fantasy*, musical styles and their implementation – even when by the same composer – are distinctly different. This reinvention or non-homogenous sound will be an idea explored throughout this text.

In addition to characters, another of Chatman's components is setting. Paul Martin's 2011 paper 'The Pastoral and the Sublime in *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*' discusses the importance of this upon WRPGs. He writes:

Like much high fantasy, *Oblivion* is set in a world, constructed from a highly wrought set of fictional histories, myths and cultures, which acts as the venue for a simple moral tale of good and evil. Beneath these two central categories a host of less abstract images take their place: light and dark, artisanship and technology, the pastoral and the industrial; binaries that are already evident in these cutscenes. On the one hand we have the darkness that shrouds the emperor, the mechanical siege engine proceeding out the hell-gate and the fire and brimstone of Oblivion. On the other we have the bucolic repose of Tamriel and its central garden city (Martin, 2011).

Martin constantly refers to descriptive scenes of the game throughout his paper, drawing connotations as to what certain scenes represent or how they impact the narrative at large. Whilst it is not a work of musicology, Martin does briefly comment on the role of the music used within it, writing that the 'tremulous strings,

¹⁶ The dissertation was written in French and a translation was gained through Google Translate.

portentous brass and the steady crash of cymbals escalate menacingly, then break and are replaced by a delicate, celestial chorus' (ibid) suggesting that he has a certain degree of expectation as to what the aesthetics of the game's soundtrack might actually be.¹⁷

Setting – as a part of narrative with CRPGs – has been studied several times within ludomusicological papers. William Gibbons describes the quasi-medieval setting of *Dragon Warrior* in relation to its music and how musical styles can help to suggest a sense of place (Gibbons, 2018). Brendan Lamb and Barnabas Smith's 2019 paper 'From Skyrim to Skellige: Fantasy Video Game Music within a Neo-Mediaevalist Paradigm' gives a commentary on the music used in the CRPGs *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* and *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, looking at the music to two hugely successful CRPGs within the canon of this genre. They write; 'The ever-expanding size of gameworlds and their increasingly realistic visual elements have thus come to require musical accompaniment of commensurate creative and artistic sophistication' (Lamb and Smith, 2019).

With reference to the above papers, it is clear that narrative has much bearing on the musical score design of a game and particularly the ludic genre known as the computer role-playing game due to how much a part of this play style is pure story. Narrative – and the components Chatman identifies – will all have a significant impact on how coherent a score will be. It is impossible to fully consider a CRPG's score without identifying the narrative context and as a consequence, detail – where appropriate – will be given concerning various games' unique narrative and how they differ between the JRPG and WRPg divide.

1.5.2 Game and Game-Music Theories

Whilst narrative is undeniably important in creating a coherent score, the ludic genre itself also plays a vital role. Each ludic genre will allow players to perform some actions and not others – for example, going beyond the bounds of the stadium to explore the city in a football simulation game such as *FIFA* is not possible, but going beyond the arena in *The Witcher III: Blood and Wine* is compulsory for advancement in the game. Similarly, you are less likely to 'level-up' in a First-Person Shooter (FPS) than in a CRPG, for the ludic-genre of an FPS encourages you to develop your skills, rather than develop statistical values. To help frame the theories that impact this thesis however, it is sensible to begin with a broader view before narrowing our focus.

To this end, we can begin by examining Roger Caillois' *Man, Play and Games*. Here, Caillois builds upon Johan Huizinga's work *Homo Ludens* (1950) and discusses the relationship that society across cultures has with the notion of play and games. He states that play is free, separate, uncertain, unproductive, governed by rules and make believe (Caillois, 2001, pp. 9 – 10); all components of video games. His discussion of games however arguably results in a definition that excludes video games to a certain degree. Instead, *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia* by Bernard Suits is better referenced here. In this work, Suits examines what it is to play a game and by extension, what a game actually is. Two points are particularly interesting when it comes

¹⁷ Scholarship concerning 'expectation' and 'aesthetics' are discussed in 1.5.3.

to playing CRPGs. Firstly, earlier on in the book, Suits writes that ‘playing a game is a voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles’ (Suits, 1978, p. 41). Discounting any forms of narrative in a CRPG – either Japanese or Western, there are going to be puzzles to overcome, enemies to be defeated and secrets to be uncovered. Game designers deliberately place these in the path of players and in return, players of these games willingly accept these obstacles as a form of a game. This is of significant; if we focus on the music of the previous examples, music is likely to be there during the solving of puzzles, perhaps ambience¹⁸ during the ‘solving’ and a stinger¹⁹ perhaps once the puzzle has been solved. Enemies to be defeated is likely to have some form of combative music to accompany the fight, with another stinger at the conclusion: either the player’s victory or defeat. Secrets to be uncovered could be physical objects or perhaps information through dialogue that might uncover new quests, areas or other plot points. In turn, this could well have a stinger cue attached if the player meets those criteria. Suits’ statement is obvious yet sophisticated in his phrasing and the implications that this has on the music that accompanies game design are vast.

Suits’ second observation that should be highlighted is his thoughts on the duality between open and closed games. He defines that a closed game is one with a specific end point, for instance reaching a certain score in ping pong, checkmating the king, or defeating the last boss in a video game. That being said, only some videogames satisfy Suits’ definition. Some CRPGs are perhaps more along the lines of open games – games that have no definitive end point. Just as in *Cowboys and Indians*, *Cops and Robbers* or other games of make-believe, some gamers do play CRPGs for the open-endedness and by doing so will play to fulfil that definition as long as it suits them. Games such as *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* as an example have an infinite number of side-quests due to the game’s ‘Radiant quest engine’ (Rowland, 2011). Combine this with a player’s desire to role-play in a form of make-believe and some CRPGs can surely be thought of as open. Nevertheless, these are an exception-rather than the norm; many single-player CRPGs place their narrative as a defining aspect of their game (see Fig. 1.6) and consequentially place enormous emotional value in getting to the final boss and completing the game. Other CRPGs that have a more open structure to them are MORPGs. This sub-genre of the CRPG actively encourages players to spend time in the world – to *play* as it were. This could be through longer fetch-quests (those where an NPC will require the player to collect five golden flowers for example), guild halls (where players can socialise in a non-combative game area) or through additional content that is slowly added to the game by the development team (games such as *World of Warcraft*, *Final Fantasy XIV*, *Guild Wars 2* and *Destiny 2* amongst many others are prime examples of this). Jon Inge Lomeland’s 2014 paper “How Can interactive Music be Used in Virtual Worlds Like *World of Warcraft*” discusses this exact point discussing the difficulties of adding additional music whilst keeping the feel,

¹⁸ I define ambience in this context as music used to represent the setting. An explanation on this term is found in section 2.1.1.

¹⁹ A stinger – as defined by Winifred Phillips – ‘is a short track, usually ten seconds or less, that is triggered when a specific event occurs’ (Phillips, 2014, p. 148).

nostalgia and history of the music and its style intact. As a consequence, open CRPGs games in which there is not a notable end-point – and particularly MORPGs – will not be a focus of this thesis.

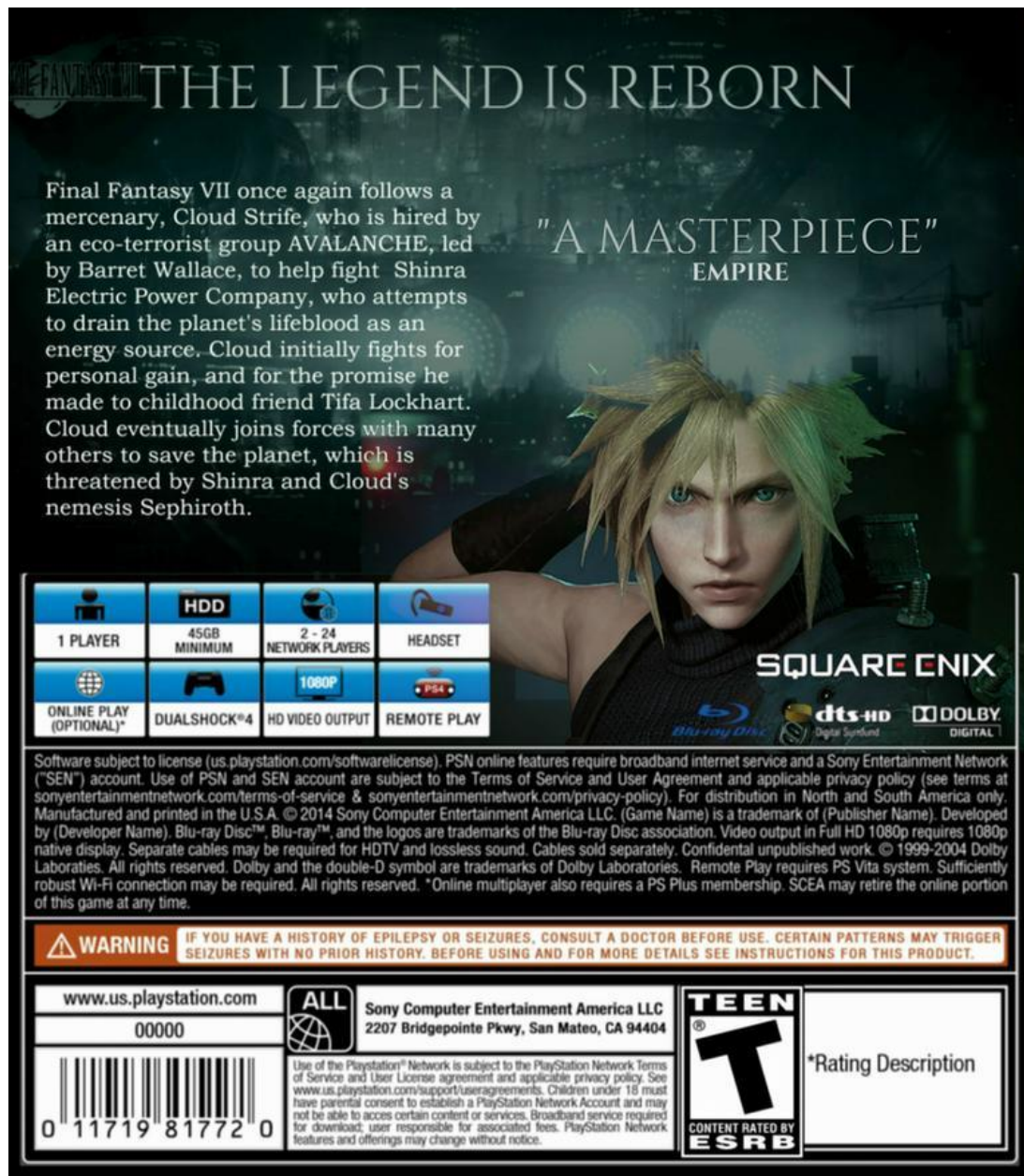


Fig. 1.6 – The back cover to *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* has a blurb that purely describes the game’s narrative and omits any reference to gameplay.

Caillois and Suits, along with other scholars of games such as Elliot Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith (1981, p. 7) and David Kelley (1988, p. 50) laid the groundwork for a 1990 academic conversation on board games in a colloquium led by Irving Finkel under the title *Ancient Board Games in Perspective* (Finkel, 1990). The colloquium had contributions from a large number of academics in fields such as archaeology and history as well as museum curators, chess grandmasters and journalists. This in turn led to the International Board Game Studies Association (IBGSA) which focused studies upon board games in a whole variety of approaches including psychology, anthropology, economy, education, and sociology. The colloquium’s effects cannot be

overstated for the papers presented provided a groundwork that ludology²⁰ would build upon. It focused upon historical board games, their rules, their cultural impacts and how people played and related to these games. By not just detailing the history and rules of games long since forgotten, but also providing research into different cultures and how they interacted with these games gave future ludologists – and ludomusicologists – a framework upon which to base their papers.

2001 saw a more direct link to this thesis' subject area. The online, peer-reviewed journal *Game Studies* became the first journal to focus on video games following the first international conference on computer games in Copenhagen – the *Computer Games & Digital Textualities* conference – in the March of that year (Aarseth, 2001). Within this journal – which continues to the present – multiple academics have written papers that either directly impact this thesis or touch upon it in some way. Marie-Laure Ryan's 2001 paper *Beyond Myth and Metaphor-The Case of Narrative in Digital Media* focuses upon the roles and differences of narrative and narrativity²¹ (or what could be thought of as gameplay) in video games. Ryan argues that anything that assists the player in interacting with a game – or program – such as the 'Office Assistant of Microsoft Office', or the metaphorical setting or script such as the 'Supermarket shopping theme of Amazon.com' plays a part in allowing the user to participate in a narrative script (Ryan, 2001). It is interesting that she immediately refers to these examples which are not of games themselves rather than for instance 'Navi' – the non-playable fairy character from *The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time* who guides the user through the game by offering hints within the game world itself as well as breaking the fourth-wall by referring what buttons the player should press. Indeed, whilst hypertext²² fiction is described numerous times, CRPGs for instance are mentioned only once. This is surprising given by how many CRPGs with branching narratives were available in 2001, particularly by developers such as Black Isle Studios and BioWare.

The debate Ryan put forwards about narrative versus gameplay continued in earnest for some years, building upon works by Espen Aarseth (2001), Jesper Juul (2001) and Markku Eskelinen (2001). Arthur Asa Berger's "Narratives in the Electronic Age" chapter in his 2002 book *Video Games: A Popular Culture Phenomenon* debated this further, as did Diane Carr (2003), Jan Simons (2007) and Barry Ip (2011). Simons adopts a more conciliatory tone, expressing the opinion that his contemporaries had lost sight of 'subtle distinctions' and that their ideologically motivated arguments 'don't hold up against closer scrutiny' (Simons, 2007). This argument of ludology versus narrative has since died down to a degree but it is wise to acknowledge its impact here. This thesis will seek to bridge this divide in terms of musical score design by acknowledging

²⁰ According to Jesper Juul – one of the earliest ludologists – the term "ludology", was first coined in 1982 by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in his paper Does Being Human Matter – On Some Interpretive Problems of Comparative Ludology.

²¹ Narrativity is a term originating in film theory and refers to how a story is presented and interpreted by the viewer whereas narrative is the story of the game itself; the overarching plot and side-quests that the player experiences.

²² Hypertext fiction is a form of electronic non-linear story-writing where hyperlinks are used to move from one story-node to another giving the reader a certain degree of influence as to how they wish the story to proceed.

music used both from a gameplay-point of view (such as stingers or victory themes) and a narrative perspective such as leitmotifs to represent characters or environmental tracks to represent settings. As suggested in section 1.2, to have a coherent score within a CRPG means acknowledging and processing multiple game elements, of which both story and gameplay are two. Without both of these, the genre's score is not satisfied. As Jonne Arjoranta (2012) writes; 'Games can be combined with stories in different ways. Different combinations lead to different meanings.' Schules, Peterson and Picard add that 'one of the defining features of modern CRPGs is the importance of story to play' (2018, p. 125). This thesis – in relation to its musical score – will explore just that.

1.5.3 Cultural Theories

This sub-section will use the term 'cultural theories' as a very wide umbrella term – similar to what Chris Barker (2007) does in his introduction to his book *Cultural Studies: Theory & Practise* – to represent any theory or research into society, culture or psychology that has a bearing upon this thesis. This heading is the final factor that this thesis hypothesises as to what affects coherence in CRPG score design; the cultural heritage of the game and how that might manifest itself into acute differences seen between those games developed in Japan and those developed in the West.

As with Chatman's theory on narrative, it is appropriate to outline the following theory before moving onto supporting pieces of literature: the theory of musical expectation. Already in this introductory chapter to this thesis, the word 'expectation' has been used a substantial number of times and the weight it carries is enormous. To that end, David Huron's *Sweet Anticipation* (2006) must be referenced. As Huron writes, 'the story of expectation is intertwined with biology and culture' (Huron, 2006, p. 3). Much of the text – particularly the biological and physiological responses the body has – are outside the realms of this thesis. Nevertheless, the ITPRA²³ model Huron outlines – and his links to both sound and music – are deeply insightful. In his chapter on surprise, Huron writes that 'if a musician wishes to evoke the experience of laughter, awe, or frisson, then the musician must be intimately familiar with the normative expectations of ordinary listeners' (ibid, p. 36). Applying this to composers – and composers of video games – then a composer must be aware of what players have experienced before in order to either confirm or subvert these expectations depending on the music that is needed at that time. This in turns leads us to theorise that in order for a musical score of a game to sound coherent, players must be able to relate it with experiences they have had of similar situations in other multi-media products: most likely film, television and other video games. For CRPGs, players will have certain expectations that mirror these multi-media products in the hypothesised three factors: how music relates to the narrative expectations, how music relates to the game expectations and how the expected music relates to the cultural-heritage of the game. For when these expectations prove to be correct, they represent successful mental functioning and are rewarded by the brain

²³ Imagination response, tension response, prediction response, reaction response, appraisal response (Huron, 2006, p. 16).

(ibid, p. 361). Additionally, when contrast is created – for example the negative feelings of a dissonant battle theme replaced by positive feelings of a triumphant victory theme – then the feeling of positivity can be heightened (and vice versa). With this in mind, it is not unsurprising that patterns occur in the music to CRPGs when both players and composers themselves wish for these successful predictions of what kind of music will be found. Academia such as Kizzire and Ivănescu’s works on nostalgia that were referenced above obviously link here. So too do a variety of other theories and scholarship and it is for that reason, that this thesis on coherence can be built upon their existing work.

As stated, Huron’s theory of expectation feeds into many papers that form the backbone to this thesis – even when not directly related to music. ‘The Character of Difference: Procedurality, Rhetoric, and Roleplaying Games’ (2009) by Gerald Voorhees is one. This was one of the first papers published in *Games Studies* that focused on a cultural explanation of an RPG; focusing upon the Japanese video game series – *Final Fantasy*. He begins with a lengthy explanation of the pen & paper RPG *Dungeons & Dragons*, describing its approach to choosing a race and class and the options available to the player upon doing so. From there he moves on to the *Final Fantasy* series, offering similar information. Voorhees breaks his *Final Fantasy* analysis down into three ‘moments’, looking at different iterations of the series from oldest to newest (at the time of his writing). He describes the physical manual that comes with the US release of the first game, *Final Fantasy* and its descriptions of heterogeneous and homogeneous parties and the game’s encouragement of parties made up of a wide array of class types. Voorhees goes on to highlight similarities across later *Final Fantasy* games. It is here, that he begins a discussion of how this might relate to real events citing that ‘the Cold War came to an end and single-issue politics and identity politics dominated public discourse [of American culture]’ (Voorhees, 2009). Yet it is here, that Voorhees misses an opportunity; for his writings focus almost exclusively upon the impact and how the game seemingly reflects upon US culture. The fact that the *Final Fantasy* series is a Japanese creation that has an international appeal is bypassed and instead a single-minded obsession to relate it to one – albeit a hugely influential – market is maintained across the paper. Credit must be given to Voorhees for bringing about conversation regarding ‘race, ethnicity, and the representational frontiers of games’ – key features in how coherence in such a fantastical game is maintained. However, for him to avoid the impact of how other cultures have impacted upon the *Final Fantasy* series is arguably an oversight.

Continuing with JRPGs, Martin Picard’s 2013 article ‘The Foundation of Geemu: A Brief History of Early Japanese Video Games’²⁴ describes the cultural and historical origins of the Japanese video game industry, arguing that although its impact on the global video games market has been documented, its impact on its domestic audience has been significantly under-researched. Picard’s paper covers much of the foundation that Chapter Four of this thesis will be built upon as he presents a description of how Japanese video gaming

²⁴ Picard defines his use of geemu as a universal word for video game although acknowledges the slight inaccuracy due to video games being normally referred to as TV or bideo geemu.

started. He looks in particular at video games being at a crossroads of ‘electronics, computer, amusement and content industries in Japan -- and technological and artistic developments - from the hardware to the software -- in which some aspects were, subsequently or synchronously, established globally’ (Picard, 2013). A holistic approach is truly necessary to fully understand how and why an industry does – or does not succeed – and for video games, Japan is crucial. Whilst a single paper cannot cover everything that might impact upon this, understanding Japan’s culture in relation to its video game sector is essential and Picard does just this.

The impact that culture has had upon the ludic genre – and vice versa – has also been discussed elsewhere. Esther MacCallum-Stewart, Jaako Stenros and Staffan Björk’s chapter “The Impact of Role-Playing Games on Culture” details RPGs impact upon popular culture, although their title is somewhat inaccurate as they focus purely on Western culture and the use of Western RPGs. As such, their text and conclusions lack a cultural discussion of those games outside of the West – in particular, the United States and the United Kingdom – especially given their conclusion that states that RPGs are seen as an important part of gaming culture – one that has made a widespread impact on other genres’ (MacCallum-Stewart et al., 2018, p. 184). They list numerous individuals from Gary Gygax to Ian Livingstone and these industry veterans are undoubtedly key to the evolution of the genre and its impact upon mainstream culture. Yet, the authors state that an important part of the evolution of this gaming genre is that these professionals move from area to area bringing with them ideas and experience. To avoid persons of interest from other cultures – particularly from Japan – limits the scope of their chapter when considering the title is “The Impact of Role-Playing Games on Culture”. Even the CRPGs listed are all Western RPGs, as they use the examples *Mass Effect* and *Dragon Age* although the examples of “Notable Films based on RPGs” do include several non-Hollywood films. As such, this thesis seeks to remedy some of the above proposed shortcomings by drawing upon works from both JRPGs and WRPGs in relation to their music.

Rachael Hutchinson draws us closer to a number of areas that this thesis hopes to expand upon. Her book, *Japanese Culture Through Videogames* (2019) details Japanese videogames as compared to their American counterparts whilst also touching upon film, manga and anime to help support her arguments. Whilst she does describe the ethnicity of characters and realisation of settings within her book, what is perhaps equally as valuable is the historical reflection of writers and artists as well as political and geographical themes found, such as war, colonialism, nuclear power, social breakdown and even what it means to *be* Japanese (Hutchinson, 2019, p. 32). Additionally, she writes that it is ‘necessary to take game design and gameplay dynamics as well as narrative themes into account when studying games’ (ibid, p. 27) – an argument already used by this thesis to frame the question of coherency. These are fundamental questions to reflect upon when thinking about coherency, especially when considering the divide between WRPGs and JRPGs. That she does not go into detail on the music used in these games suggests that this is ripe for expansion.

With some of the more pertinent ludology discussed, we can turn our attention to the relevant ludomusicology and with it the first accepted work of video game music scholarship – Matthew Belinkie’s

1999 article 'Video Game Music: Not Just Kid Stuff'. Here, Belinkie provides a brief overview of the state of video game music at the time, providing details of interviews with various industry professionals and critics and laying the foundation of many early game music studies. One of his principal points is how video game music has permeated the cultures of both the East and West:

Over the course of their childhoods, youngsters can therefore be expected each to play close to 2,000 hours of video games. Each video game has its own music. It is not then surprising that 66% of college students know the theme song to Super Mario Brothers (Belinkie, 1999).

By outlining the video game music of the time, Belinkie constantly draws comparisons between Japan and the USA, writing that within video game music, 'it is a world in which eastern musicians, greatly influenced by western music, compose music for an eastern audience, which is later sold back to the west' (ibid). This has clear links to Huron's theory of expectation. As the article progresses, Belinkie discusses the physical hardware that made up the consoles of the 1980s and 90s, the sound chips and memory allocations given to each of them and the limitations placed upon the composers who wrote for them. Further into Belinkie's article leads to a critique of cultural attitudes to game music, particularly between Japan and the United States. Whilst such attitudes since the article's publication have undoubtedly changed and progressed, Belinkie's writing provides a snapshot of video game music at the turn of the millennium. Moving forwards, William Gibbons' 2017 article 'Music, Genre and Nationality in the Postmillennial Fantasy Role-Playing Game' provides another point of reference on differences that are found due to cultural background in the music of different video games – particularly the ludic genre of the CRPG. Gibbons provides a concrete foundation in which to explore further the initial points he suggests especially as he highlights some of the JRPG/WRPG divide that will be useful when exploring the notion of coherence within this broad ludic genre. As way of introduction, he writes:

[B]oth *Final Fantasy* and *The Elder Scrolls* are long-running series of role-playing games (RPGs), a genre known for play times in excess of eighty or one hundred hours per game and immersive fantasy narratives... RPG developers frequently prioritize music in the creation process, both in terms of unusually high production values (hiring a large number of live musicians to record the score, for instance) and in an emphasis on highly regarded composers (Gibbons, 2017, p. 412).

One point of note should be acknowledged with Gibbons' article however; his focus provides a fine foundation for post-millennial computer role-playing games. Whilst he does acknowledge the eight-melody model found in 1986's *Dragon Quest*, his focus is predominantly on titles released after the turn of the millennium. Consequently, this thesis hopes to accommodate a broad discussion on titles prior to this within Chapter Two.

Another notable area of ludomusicology can now be discussed. In addition to Huron's work on expectation, the word 'aesthetics' has been used several times. To that end, Mark Sweeney's PhD thesis 'The

Aesthetics of Videogame Music' (2014) provides a useful video game music theory. I have chosen to place this in the 'cultural' category of this literature review however, for it is similar in scope to Huron's work on expectation. Sweeney's theory builds upon Graeme Kirkpatrick's book *Aesthetic Theory and the Video Game* where Kirkpatrick argues that not only are aesthetics important to video games, but that videogames are inherently aesthetic before they are anything else (Kirkpatrick, 2005, p. 3). Sweeney's theory takes this one step further by focusing on the music used within video games, describing not only how video game music seeks to represent the aesthetics that are present within the game, but that video game music is inherently aesthetic in of itself. He brings into question thinking of music used in video games as high or low culture, arguing that while video games themselves are a form of mass-media, elements amongst them – in this case primarily the music – are often hard to classify in these binary terms. He concludes his study by suggesting that players derive meaning through the game's aesthetic – semiotic, emotional, narrative and inter-textual – yet also play games as aesthetic objects (Sweeney, 2014, p. 269). Sweeney makes use of several case studies in his thesis – of particular relevance to this thesis are the chapters on the CRPGS *Witcher II: Assassin of Kings* and *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*.

Additional useful theories that do not quite fit into the generalised sub-headings stated above are numerous. Of relevance to the notion of 'coherence' is immersion – the state to which a player feels integrated in the game space (Frasca, 2001, p. 167). This has been covered from a wide range of angles: perspective in video games (Taylor, 2002), appeal and immersion (Christou, 2014), story-telling on immersion (Bormann & Greitemeyer, 2015) and character identification and immersion (Soutter & Hitchens, 2016) amongst many others that relate to the notion of coherence in CRPG score design. Within ludomusicology, Timothy Sanders and Paul Cairns 2010 paper 'Time perception, Immersion and Music in Videogames', Isabella van Elferen's 'Analysing Game Musical Immersion: The ALI Model' (2015) and Jiulin Zhang Xiaoqing Fu's 'The Influence of Background Music of Video Games on Immersion' (2015) all expand on the scholarship of music and its effects on immersion within video games. All these texts serve to underpin the psychological state of immersion in video games and the role that a variety of elements have upon that – from narrative components to music – this state is undeniably linked to the concept of coherence. Van Elferen's paper in particular offers the concepts of a theoretical model in the form of ALI²⁵ and how the intensity of a player's involvement in the game (or immersion) is greatest when the three areas of the framework overlap. To expand:

²⁵ Musical affect, musical literacy and musical interaction

- Affect can be defined as the personal investment in a given situation through memory, emotion, and identification.
- Musical media literacy is the fluency in hearing and interpreting film, television or advertising [and video game] music through the fact of our frequent exposure to them and, subsequently, our ability to interpret their communications.
- Musical interaction is interaction with and through music.

(Van Elferen, 2015)

Whilst neither of van Elferen's case studies are CRPGs, she does reference *World of Warcraft* and her theory poses a considerably wide usage, especially when considering the notion of coherence and how different ludic-genres utilise music in markedly distinct ways. In particular, the **affect** she defines has links to Kizzire and Ivănescu's work on nostalgia which in turn has an impact upon CRPGs – and JRPGs in particular – given to the length of time that has passed for many series since their first game. Additionally, per game, players are more likely to invest significantly more time than in games of other ludic genres. Musical **literacy** is also fundamental to the cultural heritage of a game; a certain degree of expectation is had by the player when going into a game; as suggested above, smooth jazz in the middle of a medieval battle for instance does not lend itself to a coherent score and thus thwarts a player's expectations. These expectations are based on the exposure to multiple works of film, television, advertising and other games that share similar themes particularly in their musical language. The more that a person has become accustomed to that particular style that is represented in these pieces of media, the more their literacy is built up. **Interactivity** is also notable in several forms throughout CRPGs though arguably perhaps more so with those that contain leitmotifs which as will be shown, are more often than not JRPGs.

1.6 Conclusion

To conclude this literature study, it is clear that the research into the ludic genre of video games known as the CRPG is distinctly in its infancy. Gibbons' 2017 article in particular provides a useful foundation with which to expand – and he cites his desire for this in his conclusion – but even here, much scholarly work is missing quite simply due to his focus on postmillennial CRPGs. It is essential therefore that an exploration is undertaken to understand how composers create a coherent score even when the multitude of factors that surround a CRPG differ so drastically. For that reason, let us summarise the main theories referenced and how they will be used to answer the question of coherence:

- **Chatman's Theory of a Narrative and Propp's 'Hero's Journey':**

The narrative of most fantasy CRPGs fall into Propp's 'Hero's Journey'. For the components of what constitutes a narrative and how these impact upon the music, Chatman's theory can be used.

- **Bernard Suits' theory of what constitutes a game:**

A game is a voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles. With this in mind, we can assume that these obstacles will have some presence within the CRPG and that music will accompany them. We need not concern ourselves with the narratology vs ludology debate when discussing this as we can assume that both will have an impact on the music.

- **David Huron's Theory of Expectation:**

Culture and biology are the key factors here. For culture, these norms are learnt over a person's life. When players play a game, they assume that certain elements will adhere to their expectations, for it can relate to their survival in the game and ultimately their enjoyment.

- **Jessica Kizzire and Andra Ivănescu's Nostalgia Theories:**

Related to Huron's theory, Kizzire and Ivănescu's theories shows us that media builds upon each other and will give us learned scenarios with which we can both look back on in order to divulge meaning from them. In this way, we have a certain cultural heritage and linking to Huron's theory will mean that we can assume that for the music of CRPGs, more often than not, expectations of the composer, designers and the players themselves must be met in order to divulge meaning from them.

- **Mark Sweeney's Theory of Videogame Music Aesthetics:**

Based upon Kirkpatrick's book, Sweeney argues that the music in videogames does not only seek to give meaning to the aesthetics of other elements of a game, but can actually take meaning from the aesthetics of the music itself.

- **Isabella van Elferen's Theory of Immersion:**

Van Elferen's ALI model allows us to consider three aspects to immersion found in game music. Applying these to CRPGs will allow us to draw substantial conclusions in the search for what creates coherency.

Ultimately, it is undeniable that the CRPG ludic-genre has diverged significantly since its inception and as a consequence, the music accompanying these games has as well. The information discussed in the following chapters – based upon these theories – will show exactly how much and why before consolidating this material into answering this thesis' fundamental question of coherence. For if the ludic genre of the Computer Role-Playing Game is as diverse as suggested, coherence is undoubtedly difficult to achieve. I therefore argue, that in order to understand how the two main forms of CRPG respond to this within music, we must first understand when they began to diverge, what factors caused this and what was the response of the composers who scored these games. This is the focus of the following two chapters.

Appendices

- Appendix 1.1 – Database of CRPGs Released Between 1997 – 2013

CHAPTER 2:

A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN FANTASY CRPGs – BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM

2.1 Introduction

For video games to be effective the individual components of graphics, sound-design, story, gameplay and so on must work together as a whole to create a coherent experience. It would not do for instance, to have a game where the controls work intermittently, the graphical textures fail to load, the music composed only plays at half the required tempo and the story reveals the big plot-twist before the player starts playing. Within these individual components of a video game, their design is a product of multiple different facets. For example, the graphics of a game consist of animation, rendering, lighting, material simulation and other various effects all must follow a consistent and coherent theme. This is also applicable with the game's sound design – the music, the sound effects, the voice acting – these must be coherent in order to offer an experience for players to immerse themselves in. Yet the journey towards a coherent whole – from the earliest video games until today – has had many milestones along the way which need to be highlighted; especially in the diverse ludic genre of the CRPG.

To get to the relative accepted coherency of musical score design found in modern CRPGs, it is useful to look back at key pieces of media and games in order to draw attention to what was tried, what worked and was then incorporated into other games, when this happened and – as stated before – when the CRPGs developed in Japan and the West began to diverge. By doing so, models can be drawn as to the types of cues heard in single-player fantasy role-playing games which showcase what is similar and what is different in our question of coherency across the JRPG/WRPG divide. As such, over the course of the following two chapters, a canonical study has been drawn of arguably the most notable of CRPG titles before a new model is presented. Before that however, several other aspects of RPGs and music should be discussed.

2.1.1 Key Terms

Over the course of this history, several key terms will be used. Consequently, it is apt to provide clear definitions of these before proceeding, in order to hopefully eliminate any misconceptions or a lack of understanding:

- **Ambience** – Coined by Brian Eno in the liner notes for his album *Ambient 1: Music for Airports*, it is defined as: 'ambient music must be able to accommodate many levels of listening attention without enforcing one in particular; it must be as ignorable as it is interesting' (Eno, 1978). In terms of ludomusicology, I define it as a cue where the pulse is disguised through a series of slow-

moving blanket chords, sometimes with fragments of a melody or a slow-moving melody played above these. As will come to be shown, this will be most associated – though not exclusively – to WRPGs.

- **J-Pop** – The term (short for Japanese Pop) was created by the Japanese radio station *J-wave* to ‘describe new music forms in Japan inspired from Western pop music in the 1990s (Monty, 2010, p. 123). According to Yoshitaka Mōri, producers at the station did not want to air ordinary Japanese popular songs, known as *kayōkyoku*, as they were not seen as fashionable enough’ (Mōri, 2009, p. 475). Instead, this music was ‘grounded in rhythm and blues yet also includes elements that listeners identify as Japanese’ (Bourdagh, 2012, p. 224) such as melodies constructed on pentatonic scales (ibid).
- **Nostalgia** – This term, referenced already in the theories of Kizzire and Ivănescu is the act of looking back at games from an earlier generation and seeking to emulate key features of them whilst utilising the technology of the present. In terms of music, this could be through the use of memorable, repetitive melodies found (as will be shown) in JRPGs of the 1980s for example, even though technology no longer necessarily restricts composers to such short cues.

With these terms defined, we can begin to explore the history of the computer role-playing game and its corresponding musical score.

2.2 Precursors to the CRPG

As shown in section 1.3.2, the notion of an RPG has many faces. Zagal and Deterding (2018) identify many aspects to what a role-playing game is, from childhood play to playing with roles²⁶ and it is not necessary for this thesis to discuss them. Nevertheless, many of the relevant theories outlined in the literature review refer to what has come before and what has been ‘learnt’ by the consumer of the media or game. To that end, we can turn to 1974 where role-play, wargaming, and fantasy literature all came together in the form of *Dungeons & Dragons* (ibid, p. 5) for this will be our introductory point as we further explore the necessary elements needed to create coherency in a CRPG.

Originally, *Dungeons & Dragons* (often shortened to D&D or DnD) was conceived as a game based on medieval warfare called *Chainmail* which used plastic figures to play the game with over a large surface – typically a dining table. Gygax belonged to a small group known as the *International Federation of Wargamers* (IFW) and although people in the group showed interest in *Chainmail*, the interest quickly waned. At that point Gygax decided to try to add variety to his ruleset by incorporating fantasy elements into it which in time became known as *Dungeons & Dragons*. These fantasy elements owed a great debt to the fantasy worlds

²⁶ They suggest various rites of passage such as weddings or funerals or other events such as parades or circuses, where the normal social order of people is transformed so that people occupy roles (Zagal & Deterding, 2018, p. 4)

of 'Middle Earth' by J.R.R. Tolkien and 'Narnia' by C.S. Lewis. Fig. 2.1 shows the official fifth-edition logo for *Dungeons & Dragons* taken from the *Wizards of the Coast* website.²⁷



Fig. 2.1 - The Official 5th Edition Logo for the TRPG *Dungeons & Dragons*

In the game, players could create a character based upon the game's degree of chance – dice rolls. Dennis Waskul writes:

From these dice rolls, players assign their persona varying levels of strength, intelligence, wisdom, dexterity, constitution, and charisma – creating imaginary personal characteristics that are best suited for the specific kinds of fantasy personas they would like to play. A player who intends to develop a wizard or illusionist needs a persona with great intelligence and wisdom, while the persona of a thief or assassin needs dexterity and charisma; each fantasy persona has prerequisite attributes (Waskul, 2006).

These were then recorded on a character sheet – an example of which has been shown in Fig. 2.2:

²⁷ *Wizards of the Coast* purchased TSR (the publisher of D&D) in 1997 (*Wizards of the Coast*, N.D.) which in itself is a branch of the *Hasbro* toy company.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

CHARACTER NAME

CLASS & LEVEL

BACKGROUND

PLAYER NAME

RACE

ALIGNMENT

EXPERIENCE POINTS

STRENGTH

DEXTERITY

CONSTITUTION

INTELLIGENCE

WISDOM

CHARISMA

INSPIRATION

PROFICIENCY BONUS

SAVING THROWS

SKILLS

PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

ARMOR CLASS

INITIATIVE

SPEED

HIT POINT MAXIMUM

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

HIT DICE

DEATH SAVED

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

EQUIPMENT

PERSONALITY TRAITS

IDEALS

BONDS

FLAWS

FEATURES & TRAITS

Fig. 2.2 - Blank Character Sheet of *D&D* Showing Attributes and Skills

Since its inception, various campaigns have been created – both officially and unofficially. For the most popular ones – including *Greyhawk*, *Dragonlance*, *Forgotten Realms* etcetera, the lore of these *Dungeons & Dragons* scenarios has grown considerably to encompass whole worlds and their relative histories – similar to what Tolkien did with his Middle Earth. With so much expansion, it is clear to see continued development of the components that Chatman identified within his narrative theory. Non-playable characters would be described, actions of the game experienced, happenings given context and all of this occurred within a consistent setting – even if the world grew with new stories. Combat itself developed over time with ‘rule sets’ being officially published describing the damage a spell would cause, or the resistance a shield would give.²⁸ As such, what was once merely stories of fantastical quests in the books of Lewis and Tolkien to name

²⁸ As shown in fig. 2.1, at the time of writing, *Dungeons & Dragons* is currently using 5th edition rules.

but a few, was now interactive fiction with a visual entity (i.e. the models and board). This quickly grew in popularity with sales in 2017 being reportedly the best since Wizards of the Coast bought the brand (Weiss, 2018) which encompasses not only the traditional pen and paper game, but films, books, videogames and other forms of digital media such as *Twitch* livestreams (ibid).

Brad King and John Borland (2003) write that ‘it’s almost impossible to overstate the role of Dungeons & Dragons in the rise of computer gaming’ which is further backed by Matt Barton (2006) – ‘Still, no matter how someone feels about [*D&D*], no one can deny it played a highly constructive role in developing the computer game industry.’ Arguably, one of the reasons why *Dungeons and Dragons* had such an impact on the CRPG front, is the amount of time that it took to play a game. A ‘game’ in *D&D* is not just a single map with a set of objectives for players to complete, but instead a series of skirmishes or scenes across various maps that make up the larger story. As such, it is suggested by some *D&D* players, that what passes as a ‘game’ varies from person to person – if side quests (non-compulsory objectives for the player(s) to achieve) are counted, the game can become exponentially longer to complete. **Appendix 2.1** gives an outline of a typical *D&D* game as described on a reddit forum post by the user ‘danstu’ (Danstu, 2018).

What the forum post describes is a typical description of a *D&D* game of which a few conclusions can be drawn. A shared narrative is described with imposed obstacles set by the game master and the dice. Individual characters are often described in the most detailed of ways, with all attributes notated on paper, generally through statistical values though the description and attributes of all other NPCs are all left to the Dungeon Master (DM). These statistical values modify dice rolls that allow them to perform actions in the game – either in combat or out of it. Combat is detailed substantially to an extent, that this could be argued is one of the defining characteristics of the game. Elsewhere on the reddit post, users describe the amount of time a single sitting of the game might take – ‘hours’ is often mentioned – and this is often only one small section of the scenario’s greater narrative.

This is similar for *computer* role-playing games. In place of the dungeon master sits the computer and the rules programmed in by the developers in the form of a ‘game engine’. This game engine will control every aspect of the game save obviously for the user’s inputs. From the visuals on display, to the actions allowed by the player, the scripting and plot to the music and sound, all of this is adapted from the dungeon master. Of course, all games seek to differentiate themselves from their competition. Some are designed to be ‘open-world’ where – to a certain degree – players are free to explore in any direction they choose whereas others CRPGs have ‘levels’ – separate areas that the player progresses to. What is not in question is that players will explore a variety of locations just as players of the *Dungeons and Dragons* game would have different maps or scenarios for different skirmishes, side quests or parts of the main story as my broad definition of what an RPG is above. *Dungeons & Dragons* is predominantly a pen and paper game, with little needed other than a set of instructions and polyhedral dice. The franchise did flirt with figurines officially and indeed these are still being produced and utilised, though this is more as a visual guide rather than any official props. A few

years later, as *D&D* evolved, a version of the game was renamed to *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* (AD&D). This version merely sought to bring together numerous ideas and rule-based systems that had originated in fan communities into one coherent rule set. The nature of only requiring the pen, paper and dice did not – and has not – changed to this day. Nevertheless, it is interesting that TSR – the publisher of AD&D at the time was – decided to offer an additional layer of immersion by commissioning a quest that featured a soundtrack. In 1985, this was realised with the album *First Quest: The Music*, as shown in Fig. 2.3:



Fig. 2.3 - The Vinyl Album Cover for the AD&D “First Quest: The Music”

The *First Quest* music album was a two-disc vinyl set or cassette, covering a number of different styles of music including pastiches of instrumental synth-pop/rock/folk, ambient tracks and electronic music. It is a compilation featuring six composers; Phil Thornton, Denis Haines, Dave Miller, Steve Parsons, Barrie Guard and G.P. Hall across 21 tracks with several having a piece of scripted narration at the beginning of them performed by Valentine Dyll.²⁹ Two tracks feature acoustic instruments – ‘The Return of the Light’ features a soprano voice (Fay Wright) and in ‘The Aftermath’ can be heard an acoustic guitar (performed by Tracey Scott). Within much of the album, we see elements of Western popular music of the time influencing the non-diegetic soundtrack in order to create an otherworldly sound. Timothy Taylor suggests similarly in his 2010 book, stating that instruments such as the theremin were oft-used in the late 1940s and 1950s to create an otherworld fantasy when ‘the spectre of technology loomed large’ (Taylor, 2010, p. 87). This can equally be applied to the use of the early synthesizers of the 1970s and 80s.

²⁹ A track-list is provided in **Appendix 2.2**

Whilst the album's overall musical style and use of such distinct synthesized timbres is no longer the norm in Western fantasy music, there are several noteworthy features that can be drawn from it:

- **The track titles:** These continue in the Tolkien-esque vein with distinctly 'setting' and 'event' based tracks. Whilst titles such as 'Elves' might suggest characters, realistically, this would be heard during a description of the elves' home. Similarly, 'Hobgoblins' does not refer to a character, but instead combat music in the players fight against them. What is not heard is anything to do with character.
- **Introduction/ending bookends:** There is music used to begin the story (or quest) as is there music to conclude it.
- **Fade outs:** Many of the tracks do not conclude in a traditional harmonic-manner by resolving to the tonic. Instead, inspiration is drawn from Western-popular music in the use of fade-outs.
- **Ambience:** Whilst several tracks have an identifiable melody, most exist without, relying on harmonic progressions with rhythmical interest to progress.
- **Synth-based timbres:** This is highly reminiscent to other pieces of notable media at the time. The US release of *Legend* (dir. Scott, 1985) had a soundtrack by Tangerine Dream and *Labyrinth* (dir. Henson, 1986) with music by Trevor Jones also made use of synth-based timbres.

One notable limitation of the vinyl/cassette-based mediums that "First Quest: The Music" had, was that it was not easy to locate the start of each track. Whilst most of the pieces were over three-minutes in length, the time it took players to complete that part of the story was unknown to the designers of the game. It would therefore be up to the dungeon master to pause the disk or cassette once the music had reached its conclusion if the current scenario that was being faced by players had not yet finished. This is a similar issue that video game composers face due to not knowing how long it will take a player to complete any one action.

There were no other official soundtracks for *Dungeons & Dragons* until 2003 when "Midnight Syndicate" was released by the American duo of Edward Douglas and Gavin Goszka under their band name of the same title. Whilst marketed as the first official soundtrack by *Wizards of the Coast* (2003) – the publishers of *D&D* at the time – this is in fact false, as stated above. The CD album cover is shown in Fig. 2.4:



Fig. 2.4 - The CD Album Cover for the D&D Official Roleplaying Soundtrack by Midnight Syndicate

This album was shorter than *First Quest: The Music*, but had a greater number of tracks. Midnight Syndicate drew upon the styles of their previous albums which were more horror-orientated than what is presented in this album; however more orchestral elements such as prominent percussion, strings and brass are incorporated here creating a sense of something more fantastical, in particular, the notable horn melodies, lower-string and percussion ostinati and high string pedals. Whilst fantasy as a genre (including the use of musical score design) in the West was in thrall to the major fantasy films of the early 2000s – most notably in such as Howard Shore’s score to *Lord of the Rings* (dir. Jackson, 2001 – 3) and John Williams’ score to the initial *Harry Potter* films (dir. Columbus, 2001 – 2/Cuarón, 2003), this is arguably only an influence. Instead, the album bears much more of a hallmark to the gothic film scores of Danny Elfman³⁰ and indeed the Western CRPGs out at the time such as *Baldur’s Gate* and *Icwind Dale* – arguably unsurprising since these were *Dungeons & Dragons*-licensed games.

What is also of note here is that this was released as a CD. This in itself is not unsurprising considering the medium, but in contrast to the previous *Dungeons & Dragons* officially licensed music, it would allow for dungeons masters to loop the track as many times as was needed, depending on how long the group took to complete a particular area or event. Therefore, this is closer to the music used in CRPGs where the exact

³⁰ For example, take the cue ‘Birth of a Penguin’ from *Batman Returns* (dir. Burton, 1992). Within this cue, Elfman make use of a ‘sighing’ motif sung by the choir – a fall of a semitone – to give an atmosphere of foreboding or suffering. Midnight Syndicate does an almost identical figure within their first track on the album ‘Prelude’. Additional similarities include the orchestration in which both include notable synthesised keyboard timbres, harp broken chords, choir and strings.

same situation occurs; developers and composers not knowing how long any one particular task will take a player to complete.

Since then, fans of TRPGs have brought together royalty-free tracks in ever-increasing numbers to help expand the atmosphere of their games into more of a multimedia experience. Websites such as tabletopaudio.com offer ten-minute tracks of a huge number of genres that aim to add an additional element to players' games. Others use soundtracks from films and CRPGs to enhance their experience, often sharing their suggestions on forums and online message boards such as reddit.com or rpg-ambience.com. This community catalogue of music cements a shared musical language of what should be expected when it comes to the score-design that accompanies various scenarios. Deviating from these expectations risks incoherence to the players. Whilst these have been amateur forays, more recently, the Australian company *Syrinscape* led by Creative Director Benjamin Loomes – a professional composer, performer and an avid gamer – released their app of the same name as donationware for Windows in 2008. As of 2013, it became an online subscription service for Windows, Mac OS, iOS and Android after requests from users. The app is based upon a series of algorithms that allow for customisable music and sound to be played during a tabletop RPG. It is designed for the dungeon master to better immerse their players in the scenario that they are currently playing. Loomes writes, 'we have sound in movies and they do a HUGE job increasing immersion and cuing viewers emotionally etc... it seemed Tabletop RPGs should have this too' (Loomes, 2019). As stated on their website:

Unlike a 15-minute looped mp3 recording which is completely uncustomisable and obviously 100% repetitive *Syrinscape* will never repeat itself. Each Element of the sound design is separately controlled by the app, automatically randomised and positioned, even things like the acoustic of the environment are dynamically applied (*Syrinscape*, 2019).

It is clearly apparent that the functions of *Syrinscape* are inspired by the adaptive/dynamic qualities of some video game soundtracks, repurposed in a Graphical User Interface (GUI) for users who may not have any musical background themselves. To this particular question, Loomes writes, 'The concepts of laying elements of music and adjusting the volume and frequency of them as the drama level changes has influenced *Syrinscape*. Important things like, making *Syrinscape* easily controllable and smooth in transition are more related to the essential improvised nature of Tabletop RPGs' (Loomes, 2019). As stated previously, it is impossible to gauge how long it will take a player (or group of players) to complete any one task in the same way as it is rarely possible to know how long it will take a player to complete an action in a video game. As such, allowing music to smoothly transition from one track – or perhaps one state – to another is what both CRPGs and *Syrinscape* allow. Additionally, *Syrinscape* also allows for community made tracks to be imported into it with further customisability and as such has a library of soundscapes that range from fantasy to science-fiction and links with official TRPGs such as *Dungeons and Dragons* and *Pathfinder*. Again – and perhaps to a greater degree than sharing pieces of music online – a shared musical language is being further

cemented in players of these RPGs. It shows that music is inherently sought-after by players and creators of these games and that without it, the level of immersion is not as great. This obeys van Elferen's ALI model of immersion:

- The affect of this catalogue is recognisable and predictable
- Musical literacy is created through this library being an accepted catalogue of music that should feature during combat, in a temple or played by a bard for example (in addition to that found in other pieces of Western media)
- The interactivity of the music through CRPGs game engines and products like *Syrinscape* allows for smooth transitions between states.

By allowing community tracks and official partnerships, we have a coherent array of music that seeks to immerse the player into the musical landscape.

2.3 An Overview of Computer RPGs and Their Music

Although the likes of *Midnight Syndicate* and *Syrinscape* come after the advent of many notable CRPGs, it was useful to show the progression of music when it comes to TRPGs like *Dungeons & Dragons* that have had such an obvious influence on the computer RPG. For as computer hardware became more powerful, games began to make the transition from the table-top to the screen. Whilst the history of video games themselves has been documented in numerous publications, it is worth highlighting the earliest CRPGs – *Dungeon*, *Pedit5* and *DND* – were all released in 1975 and were interactive text-based games all written by students at US institutions on mainframe computers. This is the starting point for the study of CRPGs and – as shown in section 1.3 – the popularity of this ludic genre has risen in popularity across the globe.

Whilst there have been forays of the history of CRPGs (most notably Schules, Peterson & Picard, 2018) and a documented history of video game music (Collins, 2008), a brief history of the music found in fantasy CRPGs is useful to highlight key milestones that have arisen in the near fifty years since role-playing games first made their way onto the screen. In this way, we can see what games have led to the musical literacy that players of these games have absorbed which influences what they might now come to expect. As a consequence, this stage will help us in identifying what factors influence our question of coherence.

Before we can do this however, it is essential to draw attention to the caveats that this next section will contain. To my knowledge, no such history has been attempted when it comes to the music of CRPGs as of November 2020. As such, if this is the first timeline, then what I have created is in effect the first suggested canon of music found in CRPGs. There have been various academic works into the issues with canonical study both in music and other disciplines – Marcia Citron (1990 & 2000), Antti-Ville Kärjä and Marsha Kindall-Smith (2006), Constance L. McKoy & Susan W. Mills (2011) to name but a few. In each, issues of exclusion and inclusion are amongst the first to be discussed – after all, what should be included and excluded and who

should make that decision? Kärjä for instance, cites Rodman (1999) in suggesting that for rock music, there are at least three different ways in telling the same story about rock music's evolution through 'great artists', publishing deals fought over by 'shrewd entrepreneurs and media empires' and thirdly that music can be catalogued depending on whether it is a 'powerful social, cultural and political force' and how in turn it was shaped by the culture around it (Kärjä, 2004, pp. 3 – 4). Citron suggests that 'the main aspect of canons that tends to remain constant is the ideology itself of immutability' (Citron, 2000, p. 15).

I therefore acknowledge that the information presented in this history are the views of only one individual and does not presume that this is a be-all-and-end-all. The games chosen are purely the games that I know of and consequently, are likely to contain omissions or present games that others may view irrelevant. Nevertheless, van Elferen's ALI model and Huron's expectation theory require players a knowledge of what comes before and whilst this brief history does not deviate from CRPGs into other fields such as film, television or advertising, it is hoped that it will create a foundation to build upon.

When it comes to discussing musical canon, we can turn to William Weber in his chapter 'The History of Musical Canon' (1999). Here, Weber identifies numerous pitfalls associated with the development of a Western musical canon. He identifies three main types of canon used within Western music:

- Scholarly Canon: The oldest of the three types, concerned originally with the philosophical and scientific consideration of the music before being transformed at the end of the eighteenth century when the theory of harmony became fundamental. In more modern times, it has had a closer relationship with the performance of music to change performing practises – particularly of early music.
- Pedagogical Canon: This is the emulation of works by master composers of previous generations to link the teaching of music with the compositional process.
- Performing Canon: The presentation of old works organised as repertoires and defined as sources of authority with regards to musical taste.

(Weber, 1999, pp. 339 – 340)

The information presented in both this chapter and the next³¹ proposes a scholarly canon, identifying the music of notable games found across the CRPG divide based on the three central factors of this thesis: narrative, ludic and cultural heritage. As such, if a game's score is felt notable for its relation to the narrative, then it has been added, if the music affects the gameplay or is essential to the ludic genre of CRPGs, then it has been included and finally, if the game's score is particularly notable from a cultural perspective, then it has been incorporated.

³¹ Chapter six however, will discuss the arguably unintended creation of a performance canon through music found in video game concerts and the dominance of music found in JRPGs.

One additional point of note should be addressed before commencing. It is presumed that for modern games, that if a game appears on multiple platforms, the sound will be the same. For example, in the *Final Fantasy XV* released in April 2020, the soundtrack heard on the four platforms it has been released on to date (Sony's *PlayStation 4*, Microsoft's *Xbox One*, Microsoft *Windows* for PC and Google *Stadia*), the sound and musical score are identical on all. However, this was not always the case. Platforms in the earliest days of video games up until the turn of the millennium wildly differed in their capabilities. Of course, every console 'generation' has expected improvements to graphics, sound, storage etcetera. However, in terms of the audio chip, this was arguably one of the areas of early console design that differed to such significant degrees that sometimes entire soundtracks were changed from one version of a game to another. To give an idea as to the array of consoles that developers would have to tailor their games for the unique architecture of, Fig. 2.5 presents a graph of all the consoles released in five-year incremental periods. The graph is based on the information in **Appendix 2.3** and although gives equal weighting to the number of units each console sold in favour of showing how many consoles were created, it does give an idea as to how disparate the industry was in the 1970s and 80s as compared to how narrow the console market is today. For further information, Fig. 2.5 has been split to show the country of origin of these consoles, which although does not necessarily show where *games* were developed, does at least suggest a worldwide technological rivalry in video games, centred around Japan and the USA:

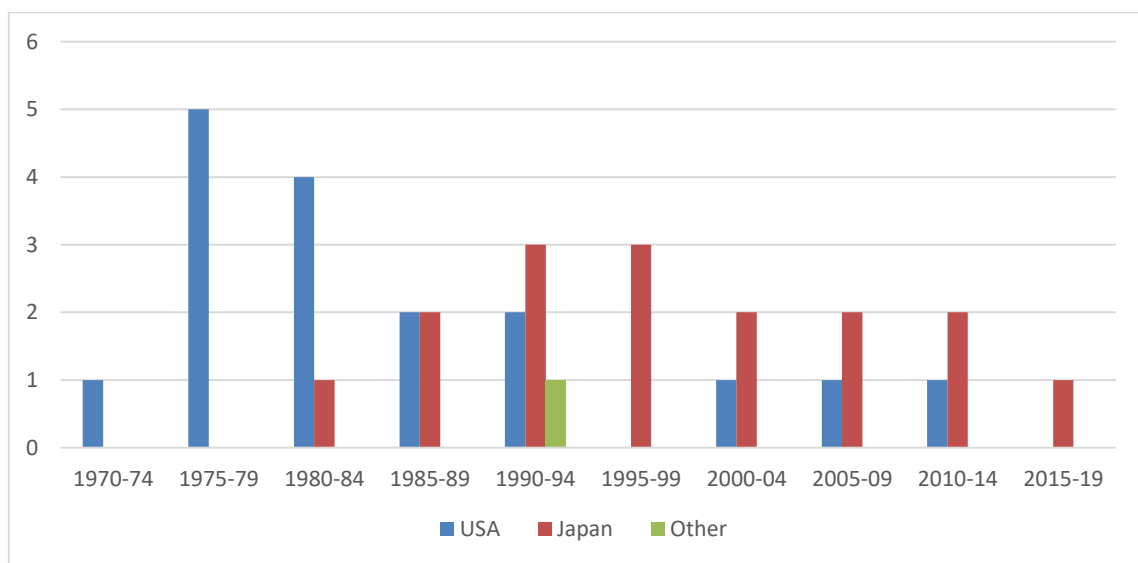


Fig. 2.5 - Game Consoles by Country per Year

Note that this data shows only the release date of 'home' video-game consoles. Handheld consoles such as Nintendo's *Game Boy*, Sony's *PlayStation Vita*, or Sega's *Game Gear* have not been included, nor have streaming platforms such as Google's *Stadia*. Additionally, whilst Nintendo's *Switch* console – released in 2017 – is designed as a 'hybrid' console where players can play both on the move and connected to a television, because of it is deemed the successor to the *Wii-U*, this has been included.

The data clearly shows that whilst the home video-game console market had an energetic beginning, with multiple rival consoles competing for dominance, the market settled by the turn of the millennium. This is unsurprising. There are many industries where a disparate market becomes more consolidated over time – cinema, news and publishers are three examples of media alone. However, it is important to emphasise the importance of videogame consoles when it comes to the games supported for them for effectively, they are the gatekeepers as to what players can play. Of course, platforms such as Microsoft’s *Windows* operating system or Apple’s *Mac OS X* operating system have thriving gaming communities. However, both publishers and developers were aware that consoles for many years were usually the most financially lucrative although since the rise of smartphones, their market share has fallen to second place (Newzoo, 2020).

In order to satisfactorily discuss a history of music found in CRPGs, it is useful to consult ludology for existing work on the genre. Matt Barton (2008) suggests that there are in fact, eight ‘ages’ of CRPGs which he defines as follows:

Dates	Name	Notes
1974 – 1979	Dark Age	Contains multiple games that have been lost to history, save for those who can recollect playing them
1979 – 1983	Bronze Age	Two CRPG series are created that can be considered milestones; the <i>Ultima</i> series (Origin Systems) and the <i>Wizardry</i> series (Sir-Tech)
1983 – 1985	Silver Age	Developers were refining their skills.
1985 – 1987	Early Golden Age	Famous JRPGs are born.
1987 – 1993	Golden Age Part I	Games begin to feature real-time 3D visuals
1993 - 1996	Golden Age Part II	
1996 – 2001	Platinum Age	Contain the ‘finest CRPGs yet designed’
2001 onwards	Modern Age	Where we are today

Table 2.1 – The Eight ‘Ages’ of CRPGs (Barton, 2008)

Leaving aside some of the hyperbole with regards to the Platinum Age, Barton’s “ages” do provide a useful framework for partitioning CRPGs based upon notable gaming milestones. However, as of 2020, Barton’s ‘ages’ of CRPGs from the ‘Modern Age’ are two decades old leaving a distinct gap in proceedings. This is similarly the case in Schules, Peterson and Picard’s (2018) chapter, with them breaking the history of RPGs into three:

- Origins and Beginnings: 1970 and 1980s
- The Golden Age of CRPGs and the Rise of Console Gaming: 1990s
- The New Millennium On

As such, video games released post the year 2000 will be discussed in Chapter Three and will be split into the various home console generations established by Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo. With these sub-headings established, it is now possible to begin this history of music found in single-player fantasy CRPGs.

2.4 The History of Music in Single-Player Fantasy CRPGs: 1974 – 2000

2.4.1 The Dark Ages: 1974 – 1979

There are several video games that feature as precursors to the CRPG – most notably *Colossal Cave Adventure*, *Zork* and *MUD1*³² – which together helped set the ground rules for the CRPGs that were to follow. The first CRPG however, is a title that is still up for debate – possibly the game *Dungeon* (1975 or 76) by Don Daglow, *dnd* (1975) by Gary Whisenhunt, Ray Wood, Dirk Pellett and Flint Pellett or *m199h*³³ by an unknown programmer. These were all text-based adventures with very limited graphics, and there was no music for any of them. Throughout the ‘dark ages’, this was true of every CRPG – the constraints of the hardware of the time meant that even the simplest of game audio was a sacrifice against another game feature. Arguably the first *commercial* CRPG however (Mahney, 2015), was the game *Beneath Apple Manor* released for the *Apple II* in 1978 and its cover is shown in Fig. 2.6:

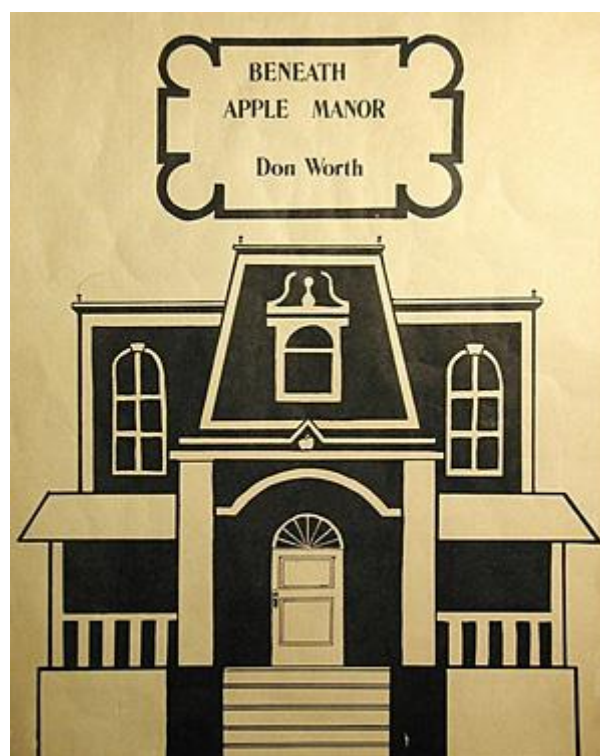


Fig. 2.6 – Box Art for the Apple II CRPG *Beneath Apple Manor*

³² *MUD* was renamed to *MUD1* to help differentiate it from its sequel *MUD2* and the ludic genre known as M.U.Ds.

³³ *m199h* appears in some PLATO lesson lists but no copies exist to confirm its exact ludic genre or its exact date of creation – only that its creation was prior to *Pedit5* in 1975 (Brewer, 2016).

Whilst although this game did not feature any music, it did in fact have some very rudimentary sound due to the *Apple II* having a toggle circuit which could emit clicks through the built-in speaker. In *Beneath Apple Manor*, the game's code clicked the speaker at the correct frequency creating a pulse of sound and suggested that whilst the technology did not really allow for it during this period of CRPG history, there were already examples of audio being considered within videogames and CRPGs.

2.4.2 The Bronze Age: 1979 – 1983

In 1982, *Dragonstomper* was released for the *Atari VCS* (also known as the *Atari 2600*). Launched in 1977 the *Atari VCS* would 'revolutionize home gaming' (Collins, 2008 p. 20). Its processor was 'manufactured specifically by Atari for sound and graphics... known as the Television Interface Adapter, or TIA chip' (ibid, p. 21). *Dragonstomper* stands out as being the first CRPG with music. Once again modelled on the TRPG *Dungeons & Dragons*, small selections of music were used in this game – mainly fragments of various famous musical clichés played on a synthesised tone that sounds similar to a harpsichord. Pieces include:

- 'Rule Britannia' by Thomas Arne upon the retrieval of the amulet,
- The 'Dragnet' theme music by Walter Schumann when entering combat (through randomised battles),
- An ascending E major arpeggio in first inversion as a victory theme,
- 'Taps' upon the player dying in combat
- 'In the Hall of the Mountain King' by Edvard Grieg upon entering the dragon's cave³⁴.

The snippets of music used are monophonic – in no small part due to the awkward tuning on the TIA (ibid) – but by including these stingers, we have a notable inclusion of two of the three factors that influence CRPG design: 1) The ludic influence – i.e. obtaining an item and combat actions required a musical stinger cue – and 2) the musical choices by the developers were written by Western composers, thus showcasing the game's Western cultural heritage. To expand; the game is set in a quasi-medieval European land, reminiscent of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* with castles, wide open countryside and churches, where there is a fantastical element such as demons and dragons. Although the musical choices were not of the Western medieval period such as chants or motets, the pieces chosen were recognisably Western in style through choices based on the British/US army in 'Taps', a US police show, and pieces of Western classical music. These choices of musical cues such as a piece used when entering combat, would be emulated far into the future, providing us with our first CRPG in which the types of cues would be modelled on. For instance, the 1983 CRPG *Gateway to Apshai* which was released for the *Commodore 64* and was 'the first proper action RPG'

³⁴ Interestingly, this is also used in the special edition of *Beneath Apple Manor* which did feature music, suggesting there was something of an aestheticism to this piece of music, which considering that the piece represents the fantastical creature of a troll, is perhaps not surprising.

(Derboo, 2010). Like *Dragonstomper* it was limited to short monophonic motifs and utilised similar stingers, such as when obtaining an item. For example, finding the sword at the beginning of the game results in a B major scale played up to the dominant before returning back to the supertonic.

Ultima III: Exodus (henceforth known as *Ultima III*) – released for the *Apple II* in 1983 – was the third main game in the *Ultima* franchise³⁵ and not only built upon these cues, but laid down the groundwork as an incredibly important model for many later games. It contained a soundtrack composed by Kenneth W. Arnold which required the ‘Mockingboard’³⁶ expansion card to play. Unlike the previous CRPGs mentioned, this was the first CRPG with an original musical score which was advertised as a selling point.³⁷ The game contained several unique tracks including:³⁸ ‘Wanderer’ (utilised as the main theme and the overworld³⁹ theme), ‘Town’, ‘Castle’, ‘Shrines’, ‘Dungeon’, ‘Combat’, ‘Shopping’, a final area track ‘Exodus’ Castle’ and an ending theme. Like with *Dragonstomper*, it also contained a number of stinger tracks including a monophonic three-note combat start and a monophonic four-note victory theme. Considering these tracks, we can see that along with the similarities found in *Dragonstomper* and *Gateway to Apshai*, there is a clear structure of tracks that originates here. All of the musical choices are all narrative based with settings and events the primary focus, although with the ending theme, a happening has been heard. Whilst the stingers are monophonic, the tracks are mostly in three-part harmony writing. Arnold wrote the music in a style that is a pastiche of Classical-style keyboard music, for instance the sonatinas by Clementi which feature three-part writing: typically, a melody-dominated homophonic texture with a distinct right-hand melody, a left-hand playing notes centred around the chord with occasional decoration and then a third part which typically harmonises the melody in thirds or sixths. Whilst although this does not tally historically with the Western-medieval setting of the game, it creates a sense of medievalism – similar to how Karen Cook (2019) describes the use of the gothic organ in video game music scores in much the same way.

Ultima III is indeed a key milestone within this history of the CRPG musical score. It brings together many of the stylistic features found in the previously mentioned games, such as stingers and environmental/combat cues. In utilising an early Western Classical-period keyboard style, it brings together a logical sense of medievalism if not fundamentally accurate portrayal of the quasi-medieval time period in which the game appears to be set (see above). In this case, we can refer back to Sweeney’s aesthetic theory. Clearly, the musical score is attempting to match the aesthetics of the visual and narrative elements of the game. Yet, I

³⁵ *Akalabeth: World of Doom* – released in 1979 by Richard Garriott, the same developer – was a predecessor of the *Ultima* series.

³⁶ Curiously, the in-game text that features in the game’s boot sequence, spells it as ‘Mocking Board’.

³⁷ Due to the difficulty of seeing the text on the cover, this has been included in **Appendix 2.4** rather than in the main body of the text.

³⁸ The cue titles were never made official and are based on names found on the internet on several sites.

³⁹ An overworld is a term used to describe an area within a video game that connects all other areas. The *Ultima* series was one of the first to have an overworld and many other games have made use of them, including notable games such as *Super Mario Bros.*, *The Legend of Zelda*, *Dragon Quest*, *Final Fantasy* and *Minecraft*. In each of these games listed, there is a piece of non-diegetic music that is used to accompany the player, hence the term ‘overworld theme’.

argue that this game is so important in the history of CRPG scores, that here, this style of video game musical composition has become an aesthetic in its own right. Coherence is achieved through this medievalism by linking an older pastiche of music with a clear melody to the narrative and visuals, thereby creating an approximate but entirely acceptable link in the player's mind.

With the success of CRPGs in the West however, it was inevitable that developers in other parts of the world would follow suit. Japan with its technology-heavy industry was a perfect fit. Whilst game consoles as we know them today were less common, home computers just as in the West were gaining traction in Japanese households. Among these, the Japanese IT company NEC helped to push home computing with the PC-8000 series, succeeded by its 6000 and 8800 series. Confusingly, there were several different models of each, some with significantly better graphical and sound capabilities than others, particularly with the PC-8801mkII that was released in 1983. Games were able to be played on these and of these, 'one of the first documented [fantasy] Japanese CRPGs is Koei's *Dragon and Princess*,⁴⁰ distributed in 1982 on the NEC PC-88 and the Fjitsu FM-7' (Schules, Peterson, Picard, 2018 p. 116). Whilst the game did not have a musical score, it is useful to be considered as a starting point for commercially-released CRPGs in Japan as *Beneath Apple Manor* was in the West. The same year, *Dragon Lair* (not to be confused with 1983's *Dragon's Lair*) was released on the PC-8001 and FM-7 which was a CRPG designed by an American husband-and-wife duo: John and Patty Bell (Derboo, 2015). Very much an example of a cross-cultural game, this was a title that is purported to have been released exclusively for Japanese audiences. No music is used in it; however, it does mark a shift towards the genre of CRPGs in Japan to which it would eventually become famous for.

The end of Barton's *Bronze Age* was a period of intense turmoil within the video game industry – particularly in the West. Mirko Erkvist writes that, 'the 1979 – 1981 period in programmable consoles was a very innovative one, with an increasing number of differentiated games of high quality appearing each year' (Erkvist, 2008 p. 184). However, this innovation would come to an abrupt halt in 1983. With the industry still very young, skilled developers were in short supply and with the credit behind development studios being supplied by venture capitalist firms 'without a long-term commitment to the industry' (ibid, p. 185), it meant that when in 1983 a 'complex series of economic, industrial and cultural factors coalesced' (Altice, 2012 p. 105) and a string of critically-panned games failed to sell, this led to credit drying up and numerous Western developers went bankrupt. The value of the US and European markets in particular plummeted and there were fears that video games as a form of entertainment would never recover.

Nevertheless, despite the unsettlement in the commercial videogames market, several games provided important features in the quest for overall coherency in musical score design. *Dragonstomper* introduced the notion of stinger tracks within CRPGs, *Ultima III* presented a model of typical tracks made up of three of

⁴⁰ There is some contention here, with Steven Messner of PC Gamer in a 2017 article suggesting that Koei's *Underground Exploration* or *Spy Daisakusen* are arguably the first JRPG. However, as neither titles are fantasy in their fictional setting, it does not have an overall impact to this history.

Barton's four components of a narrative and CRPGs had begun to be made in Japan, influenced by the major WRPG series such as *Wizardry* and *Ultima*.

2.4.3 The Silver Age: 1983 – 1985

With the Western video game market in turmoil, the bulk of the evolution in CRPGs over the next few years happened in Japan. Of these, several stand out. *The Black Onyx* in 1984 was released for the PC-8801 originally although ported to numerous other devices since then. It was a fantasy CRPG and its lead designer was the Dutch-born, US-raised Henk Rogers who “‘chased a girl” to Japan and ended up staying there for almost a decade’ (Bolingbroke, 2015). The soundtrack, composed by Tokuhiko Uwabo (credited under his pseudonym BO) – his first video game soundtrack – is non-diegetic throughout and accompanies all of the different areas (for example the cemetery), with only sound-effects providing any interactivity – swinging a sword for example will provide a ‘swoosh’. On its own, this is not particularly different to *Ultima III*, yet the style of the music Uwabo includes has a distinctly different cultural heritage. Consider the following musical example shown in Fig. 2.7 and [audio track 2.01](#). In *Ultima III*, Arnold had composed in a Baroque pastiche, which although not medieval, created a sense of medievalism. Uwabo chose a different approach. Combat is accompanied by a seven-note motif and the title theme contains a two-part motif that is played several times with different synth sounds playing the upper part and the same bass timbre playing the lower part:



Fig. 2.7 - Piano Transcription of *The Black Onyx* Main Title Motif by Tokuhiko Uwabo

This is clearly not in the style of Western classical pieces found in the previous examples and does not create a medieval pastiche. Instead, we can arguably look to more contemporary styles such as rock or perhaps like the sometimes fantasy-inspired prog-rock (Haggery & Halliwell, 2011, p. 2) due to the similarities akin to a guitar riff – particularly in the bass. Unlike *Ultima III*, *The Black Onyx* did not feature a continuous soundtrack – there was no overworld theme for instance, nor was there a combat theme – yet in the style of *Dragonstomper*, there were stingers used at the start of a battle, or each time an enemy died in battle.

The musical score to *The Black Onyx* is another milestone within this CRPG history. Here we have a completely distinct style to that of *Ultima III* (or *Ultima IV* that would follow the next year, again composed by Arnold) which deviates from the narrative element of the quasi-medieval setting that the player is seeing. This is perhaps the first clear divergence between CRPGs made in the West and those in Japan.

Of those Western studios that had overcome the turmoil of the market crash, game development continued. In 1985, the CRPG *The Bard's Tale* was released for *Apple II* and *Commodore 64* and would go onto become the best-selling Western CRPG of the 1980s (Maher, 2016). Drawing upon Western Medieval-inspired fantasy fiction, it told a simplistic story about a rag-tag group of adventurers being the last line of defence against an evil wizard who was threatening a country town. Of note, were the significant graphical improvements, partly-animated character portraits and the concept of the Bard as a playable-character-type. Lawrence Holland was the composer and music programmer for the game, drawing upon Medieval and Renaissance compositions of Western Classical music to create a pastiche piece. With an emphasis on the bard character, many tracks – particularly involving a tavern – make use of timbres reminiscent of a lute or mandolin. Here we can see all three factors that influence CRPG score design: firstly, that the narrative centres around the bard, and many tracks utilise an approximation of this timbre. Secondly, the bard's songs were central to the CRPG – Michael Tresca writes that the game 'featured unique music for each song, and these were key to solving some of the challenges in the game' (Tresca, 2014, p. 139). Thirdly, Holland purposefully writes in the pastiche of the quasi-historical time period of the game. 'The Adventurers Guild' for instance, is the cue heard at the beginning of the game during the character creation screen and is a sixteen-bar loop based on 'Pavana: The Earl of Salisbury and the two Galliards' by William Byrd and thus reflecting the Renaissance pastiche stated above.

The of the Silver Age was not as turbulent as the end of Barton's Bronze Age, but suggests an industry – and ludic genre – that was still finding its direction, both in the wider game and narrative, and sonically. This would change however, in the next era.

2.4.4 The Early Golden Age: 1985 – 1987

The Bard's Tale – I argue – was one of the few WRPg titles whose musical score was of note during the mid-1980s⁴¹. The scores with the most enduring legacy however, would be created by developers across in Japan.

Whilst released in Japan in 1983 under the name *Famicom*, it was not until 1985 when Nintendo released the renamed *Nintendo Entertainment System* (NES) in the US. Many commentators of the video game market

⁴¹ This is supported by Schules, Peterson and Picard who although focus on CRPGs in general (rather than just their music), skip every other WRPg after *The Black Onyx* until the 1990s in their history (2018, p. 117).

crash in Western markets in 1983 attribute the sector recovery to that of the NES's arrival in the US in 1985 (Cunnigham, 2013). It is important to emphasise this last point – a Japanese company would play a major role in shaping the video game scene; not just in the West, but worldwide. For the NES, the composer Yukio Kaneoka is credited with creating its sound chip – a custom five-channel PSG chip capable of producing three tone-based channels (two pulse-wave and one triangle wave), a white noise channel (used for percussion and sound effects) and a one-bit sample track. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this sound-chip would become synonymous with the sound of video games of the 1980s – as Andrew Schartmann writes, 'Nintendo was the first video game company to funnel considerable resources into sound development' (Schartmann, 2018, p. 4). Schartmann also points to the fourth entry Nintendo's pamphlet on the NES which states that a game on its system should have 'lush audio characteristics complete with complicated musical scores' (ibid, p. 18) – something that composers for CRPGs of this generation would arguably create, despite the restrictions of the PSG chip.

Drawing inspiration from earlier CRPGs such as *Wizardry* and *Ultima* (Kalata, 2008), the video game designer Yuji Horii conceived the game *Dragon Quest* (*Dragon Warrior* in the US) in 1986 which would become known as a genre-defining JRPG; a title not just as a geographical location, but as a play-style due to the impact it would have on future games.

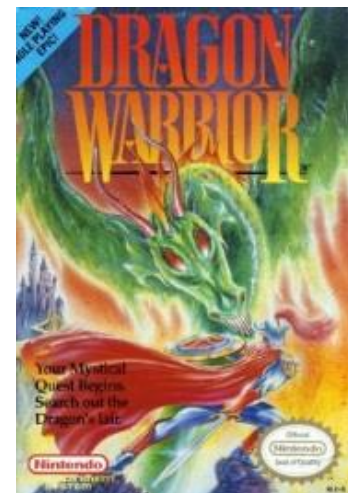


Fig. 2.8 & 2.9 - Box Art for *Dragon Quest* with its manga-based art-style (left) and the US-version *Dragon Warrior* with a more generic Western fantasy-style art (right).

Designed as an RPG for younger audiences, it had an art style reminiscent of popular manga of the time (Fig. 2.8) thanks to Akira Toriyama, with a fairly simplistic plot that falls exactly into Campbell's "Hero's Journey" narrative theory: the player is a nameless knight who sets off to retrieve a sacred artefact stolen by an evil warlock on behest of the king and upon triumphing, the hero sets off with the princess. Although the art work was by a manga artist, the world is set in a quasi-Medieval European map and there are still many influences of *Dungeons and Dragons* with regards to the narrative. These influences are more evident in the box art of the US released of the game *Dragon Warrior*, shown above in Fig. 2.9.

The soundtrack for the game was written by Koichi Sugiyama who would become something of an industry icon, as will be discussed further in Chapter Four and Chapter Six. For context, Sugiyama graduated from the University of Tokyo with full honours in 1958 after studying Classical Music Theory. After a stint in broadcasting, Sugiyama moved into composition and orchestration before eventually being employed by Enix. His soundtrack to *Dragon Quest* ‘featured around ten minutes of classically-styled music that, while enormously technologically limited with just three superficial sounding synthesizer channels available, was still filled with charm thanks to its diversity, melodic emphasis, and meticulous musicality’ (Greening, 2007). So well received was the music to *Dragon Quest* that Sugiyama arranged eight tracks for orchestra which were performed by the Tokyo Strings Orchestra.⁴² The eight tracks were as follows:

- Overture (Opening)
- Castle
- Town
- Field
- Dungeon
- Battle
- Final Battle
- March (Ending)

As can be seen, these build upon the groundwork created by Arnold for *Ultima III* with many of the same types of tracks. Additionally, *Dragon Quest* also contains similar stingers – one for entering combat, one for victory in combat and one for defeat. Several commentators have suggested that these form the foundation for more or less every RPG soundtrack since then (Gann, 2008). Let us briefly compare this to Chatman’s model of narrative. If we accept that a ‘Battle’ is an action, this piece of music matches. Likewise, a piece of music used to represent a castle, town, field and dungeon are settings, again we have a match. Finally, an overture and ending theme must surely be ‘happenings’ for they cannot have occurred without reference to other events. Nevertheless, we can say here, that this does not fully meet Chatman’s model of a narrative or all the conditions of Propp’s ‘Hero’s Journey’ through a lack of cues concerning characters.

These templates set by Sugiyama and Arnold would go onto be interpreted by multiple composers of different nationalities as a basis of CRPG composition. Nevertheless, whilst Gann – and later Gibbons (2018, p. 418) – suggest that these tropes are now the primary model found in CRPGs, I argue that this model either does not fit more recent titles in regards to the majority of JRPGs, or needs expanding on in terms of WRPGs. Whilst my model – introduced in section 3.3 and then expanded further at the end of Chapter Four and Chapter Five – shows similarities, the wealth of music found in CRPGs and the more diverse narratives of future games are under-represented by this current model and thus a coherent score understood by all

⁴² This is a division of the Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra and the suite included brass and percussion.

players has not yet been reached. Further discussion on this will be explored at the conclusion of this historical section.

Returning to *Dragon Quest*, it is appropriate to consider some of the music from a formal perspective, given the influence that both myself and other commentators have placed upon Sugiyama – particularly for JRPGs. As such, a transcription was made of the game’s main theme – the ‘Overture’ heard on the title screen – in order to provide context. This can be heard in [audio track 2.02](#) and seen below in Fig. 2.10 through converting a .nsf⁴³ file into MIDI before importing into Avid’s *Sibelius Ultimate* and showcases the three parts based on the three wave forms that the NES sound chip allowed. The piece is split into two principal sections: a fanfare introduction followed by an anthemic march-like section which is repeated until the player presses a button to continue. Interestingly, despite the anthem-like nature of the piece, the white noise track – typically used as a form of primitive percussion – is not used.

⁴³ A .nsf file is a music rip of a NES ROM.

$\text{♩} = 80$

1

4

10

15

Fig. 2.10 – Transcription of the ‘Main Theme’ (Overture March) to *Dragon Quest* by Koichi Sugiyama.

The main theme to *Dragon Quest* is highly reminiscent of the music to many western cinematic films, arguably drawing inspiration from the many militaristic marches found in the golden age of Hollywood cinema, for example Korngold’s score to *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (dir. Curtiz/Keighley, 1938). Apparent

within the score is Sugiyama's training in Western Classical music theory; for instance, the use of various inversions, the circle of fifths between bars twelve to fifteen and again in bars sixteen to nineteen and also various seventh chords within a simple three-part texture⁴⁴ showcase this well. Undoubtedly, the choice in music style made use of Sugiyama's training, but the musical style is likely also due to the influence that *Wizardry* and *Ultima* – and ultimately *Dungeons and Dragons* – had upon the game's narrative. To expand, consider the setting of *Dragon Quest* which I argue has the highest level of impact upon the game's narrative of all of Chatman's components. Here, as stated above, we see a quasi-Medieval European setting. This impacts everything, from the design of castles and towns, to the world at large which is predominantly grasslands, rivers, mountains, forests and caves – which is highly reminiscent of European folklore and other fantasy worlds such as Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. *Wizardry*, *Ultima* and *Dungeons & Dragons* all feature these European components of which – as Schules, Peterson and Picard state – were the most famous CRPGs imported to Japan during the early to mid-1980s (2018, p. 117). By extension, Sugiyama's music would most suit the Western-orientated design of the world if he were to compose in this style, rather than one more closely representing the music of Japan during this time period.

The impact of *Dragon Quest* and Sugiyama's soundtrack on console JRPGs cannot be understated. Whilst, it does not deviate in the same way that *The Black Onyx* does from the precedent set by *Ultima III*, it refines the clear melody-dominated cues, laid down by Arnold and sets the model that would be emulated by JRPGs for the next several years. Indeed, another video game composer Nobuo Uematsu is quoted as saying 'Koichi Sugiyama is a big boss of game music' (Steffen, 1999).

Another noticeable by-product of the popularity of Sugiyama's music for the game was the release of the first CRPG soundtrack, recorded by the Tokyo Strings Ensemble in 1986 titled "Dragon Quest I: Symphonic Suite". Additionally, in 1987, the very first public concert of video game music was held; more information in which is discussed in Chapter Six. Nevertheless, with both the release of the soundtrack and the original concert leading to many more "Family Classic Concerts", these would soon become staples of many JRPGs. After *Dragon Quest* sold over 1.5 million units (Schules, Peterson, Picard, 2018, p. 117), several sequels were released in quick succession leading 'schoolchildren across the country [to call] in sick to line up outside stores for their precious cartridges' (Kohler, 2016, p. 95). This was also felt by other game developers. 'Soon, the RPG – patterned largely after mainstream, anime-inspired worlds of *Dragon Quest*, not *Dungeons and Dragons* – would become one of the mainstay genres of Japanese video games' (Kohler, 2016, p. 96). Kohler's point is profound – without *Dragon Quest*, JRPGs as we know them today would have continued to have been influenced more by the features of the American *Dungeons and Dragons*. This change to a more international reflection of culture is discussed in depth in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

⁴⁴ This texture is much the same as Arnold's for *Ultima III*, described above.

From *Dragon Quest's* influence, multiple RPGs were then released for the NES over the following year including console ports of *Ultima III: Exodus* and *Wizardry: Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord*. However, the biggest game released because of *Dragon Quest's* influence was by Enix's direct competitor Square. In 1987 under the direction of Hironobu Sakaguchi, Square released *Final Fantasy*. Described as a clone of *Dragon Quest* by some commentators (Kalata, 2008) the details behind the first *Final Fantasy* and where its name came from have become infamous. In an interview, Sakaguchi is quoted as saying 'the name 'Final Fantasy' was a display of my feeling that if this didn't sell, I was going to quit the games industry and go back to university. I'd have had to repeat a year, so I wouldn't have had any friends – it really was a 'final' situation' (Fear, 2007). Like *Dragon Quest*, *Final Fantasy* made use of a distinctly Japanese style of the box art for the domestic version which was replaced by a Westernised version for the US release as shown in Fig. 2.11 & 2.12.

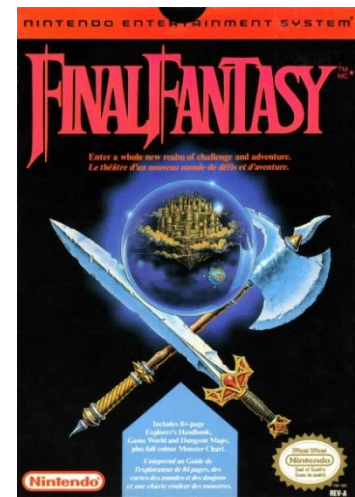


Fig. 2.11 & 2.12 - The Box Art to *Final Fantasy* showcasing a distinct difference in art-style between the Japanese release (left) and US version (right)

The narrative themes in the game are arguably slightly more mature than in *Dragon Quest*, but like its spiritual predecessor, *Final Fantasy* follows the typical 'Hero's Journey'. The game's soundtrack and indeed all of the main-numbered sequels until *Final Fantasy X* were solely by the composer Nobuo Uematsu. Arguably one of the most famous composers in video games, Uematsu joined Square in 1986 and provided the game with his sixteenth video game score (Game Trailers, 2016, 00:02:12). Consisting of over 20 tracks, much of the music emulates a pastiche of a Western Classical style whilst some tracks combine elements of pop amidst other genres. Take for example the "Prologue" to *Final Fantasy* (as heard in [audio track 2.03](#) and shown in Fig. 2.13), which like with *Dragon Quest's* "Main Theme" would go onto become the series' anthem. As before, the track was created through converting a .nsf file into MIDI before importing into Avid's *Sibelius Ultimate* where I have organised the rhythms appropriately.

Like with Sugiyama's theme for *Dragon Quest*, Uematsu forgoes the white noise track to add percussion instead relying purely on three-part writing available on the NES's three melodic channels. A thematic melody

is heard on the upper channel featuring two noticeable instances of rising sevenths with the bass mainly playing a conjunct scalar line as it descends. The inner part occasionally plays in counterpoint – for instance in bars nine and ten – although at other points follows the upper voice’s rhythm to harmonise. With this focus on memorable melody-dominated homophonic writing (albeit with several contrapuntal moments) both from Sugiyama and Uematsu and the well-documented commercial successes that the games had; the groundwork was set for other JRPG composers to follow suit.

Fig. 2.13 - Transcription of the “Opening Theme” to *Final Fantasy* by Nobuo Uematsu

Before continuing, it should be noted that neither *Dragon Warrior* – the US version of *Dragon Quest* – nor *Final Fantasy* made were released outside of Japan for three years after their release; *Dragon Warrior* in 1989 and *Final Fantasy* in 1990. Whilst these games – and their soundtracks – were incredibly important milestones in console RPGs, the first Japanese RPG to make it to US shores would arrive a few years earlier in 1987. The Early Golden Age of CRPGs had brought with it the two most infamous JRPGs in video game history and with no real reply from the West, JRPGs would be the ones to lead the genre of the computer role-playing game for the next few years, both in graphics and music and this set the scene for the divergence of the two stylistic sub-genres of CRPG.

2.4.5 The Golden Age Part I: 1987 – 1993

Barton's "Golden Age" covers a period marked by significant change within both video games as a whole and within CRPGs. Whilst home computers like Sinclair's ZX Spectrum, the Commodore 64 and Commodore Amiga series would continue to sell well within the West, consoles such as the NES and Sega Master System gained traction not only in Japan, but also in the West as well, followed by the next generation of these consoles the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES) and Sega Genesis at the end of the 1980s and at the start of the 1990s.

Whilst information has already been addressed about games making their way from the US to Japan, the inverse of this would not occur until the release of the CRPG *Miracle Warriors: Seal of the Dark Lord* was released on the Sega Master System in 1987. Although originally released for PC-88 in 1986, it was ported to the MSX, the NES and the Sega Master System. The Sega Master System version is a very interesting port, for how different it was compared to the other versions. In particular, the Master System version has a more vivid colour palate and a completely different soundtrack compared to the NES version – the only two versions of the game released with music. Culturally, the Sega Master System version of the game is significant for being 'the first JRPG to reach American shores' (Kalata, 2007) (Schules, Peterson, Picard, 2018, p. 117). The end of the game yields no credits screen nor does the user manual in the boxed version of the game contain any staff credits so information with regards to the game's composer(s) is difficult to ascertain. Fig. 2.14 and 2.15 show the title screens to both versions whilst below in Fig. 2.16 and 2.17 are transcriptions of the accompanying pieces of music heard (complimented by the original audio examples in [audio track 2.04](#) and [audio track 2.05](#)).



Fig. 2.14 & 2.15 - Title Screens to *Miracle Warriors: Seal of the Dark Lord* on the Sega Master System (left) and *Haja no Fūin* on the NES (right).

♩=132
8^{ms}

5 (8)

9 (8)

11 (8)

Fig. 2.16 - Transcription of the “Title” to *Miracle Warriors: Seal of the Dark Lord* on Sega Master System

As way of comparison, below is the main theme to the NES version of the game:



Fig. 2.17 - Transcription of the “Title” to *Haja no Fūin* (*Miracle Warriors: Seal of the Dark Lord*) on the NES

A significant change in musical style has appeared in the Master System version compared to the title themes to *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy*. Whilst the NES version’s soundtrack has only the three tonal tracks similar to the aforementioned pieces – and much of the rest of the version’s musical score would not be too much out of place in those games – the Master System’s release features a driving percussive beat played on the white-noise track which is prominent throughout the rest of the version’s musical score. Stylistically, the music is much more reminiscent to a sci-fi soundtrack of the time, for instance the 1987 game *Missile Defense 3D* – a game about shooting down missiles – where like with *Miracle Warriors*, there are two-bars worth of sustained semibreves acting as a root note of the chord, a driving percussion beat and use of semiquavers. This is a notable departure from the melodious anthemic music heard elsewhere in fantasy CRPGs and indeed

this piece could quite easily be thought of to fit within a typical rock band formation: picked lead guitar, rhythm guitar (albeit only playing one tone here due to technical restrictions), a bass guitar and a drum kit. With so much of the information having been lost surrounding this version, it is hard to determine why exactly the music was changed so drastically between versions, even if the majority of the other game characteristics were similar. One hypothesis could be, that this stylistic design choice was due to a greater percentage of the total number of Master System units sold being outside of Japan than with the NES (VG Legacy, 2021; Nintendo, 2010). Whilst rock-music in Japan was only beginning in the 1980s with bands such as Shonen Knife, Boredom and X Japan in addition to the subgenre of rock known as Visual Kei, rock had become greatly established within the West by this point. Consequently, the push for a more rock-stylised score in the Master System version of *Miracle Warriors* could represent that apparent association with the West. Nevertheless, what can be suggested here, is that this is a continuation of the musical style found in *The Black Onyx*, rather than that of *Dragon Quest* or *Final Fantasy* and thus of more of a divergent style than the three-part writing first found in *Ultima III* and then imitated in these aforementioned CRPGs.

In addition to *Miracle Warriors*, there were two other noteworthy Sega Master System CRPGs that must be mentioned. The first of these is the Japanese developed *Ys: The Vanished Omens* (sometimes known as *The Ancient Land of Ys* or *Ys 1: Ancient Ys Vanished*) by Nihon Falcom published in 1988. Although, like with *Miracle Warriors*, the game was originally released for PC-88 a year earlier, the Master System release is generally the version most associated with the game as this was the version that was originally given a US release. *Ys* is an Action-RPG and so the game's focus was more on combat than on narrative which is simple and falls neatly into Campbell's "Hero's Journey". It details the journey of the swordsman Adol Christin who is sent out to gather the six Books of Ys to stop the great evil that is sweeping the land. The game itself is quite short in terms of its play-length and is often bundled together with its sequel *Ys II: Ancient Ys Vanished – The Final Chapter* which was released the following year. The music for *Ys 1* was composed by Yuzo Koshiro in addition to Mieko Ishikawa. For the second game, Hideya Nagata also provided assistance. Whilst the soundtracks are almost identical in most versions of the game, certain versions have some exclusive cues. Several notable Western composers such as Christopher Hülsbeck have cited the music for *Ys* as inspiration for their own compositions (Hülsbeck, 2010). Another notable point, was that for the release of the TurboGrafx-CD version of the game, *Ys* became one of the very first titles to make use of Red Book audio and thus was the first video game to have streamed music from disc rather than the platform's audio chip synthesising everything (Mattich, 1998).

For the title theme to *Ys*, Koshiro and Ishikawa created a leitmotif for the character Feena – a mysterious blue-haired girl – which is one of the first notable character themes heard in a CRPG and acts as her leitmotif across both *Ys I and II* and a transcription of her character theme is shown in Fig. 2.18 and heard in [audio track 2.06](#). This is of particular importance as this is one of the first CRPGs to contain music that meets all aspects of Chatman's narrative theory. It does not necessarily break away from the eight-cue model that

Gann suggests, but instead expands upon it. Due to the nature of this cue being directly related to a character – a character theme – players would be reminded of this character across not only *Ys* but also into *Ys II*, thus creating a sense of nostalgia for the character and a sense of expectation. Whilst ‘Feena’s Theme’ is not a leitmotif as it remains the same throughout, leitmotifs would eventually be used within JRPGs to show growth, regression or changes to principal characters.



18

23

26

28

Fig. 2.18 – Transcription of ‘Feena’s Theme’ from *Ys* composed by Yuzo Koshiro and Mieko Ishikawa

There are several interesting features of note within Koshiro and Ishikawa's writing. The game's plot does not feature a stereotypical happy-ending for the character and combined with the mystery of who she is and the mystical powers she wields, the use of sevenths (both major and minor versions) and ninths are heard across the piece with no resolution to any standard triads. Additionally, the revelation that Feena is one of the two mystical goddesses that comes later in the plot is arguably reflected through the lack of any real bass – B3 being the lowest pitch heard in the theme. Whilst 'Feena' is not the only character theme – the principal protagonist and player-controlled character Adol Christin⁴⁵ has one as well – due to the cue placement in the game, 'Feena' would be heard first. What *Ys* shows, is that the 'model' of typical cues in CRPGs – set by *Ultima III* and then *Dragon Quest* – is now imperfect. Coherency is achieved through the manipulation of all four of Chatman's components of a narrative and character themes would come to be a distinct part of the JRPG musical score. Additionally, stylistically, the piece is moving away from the western Classical-pastiche first heard in *Ultima III* and then emulated to a degree by *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy*. Instead, the aforementioned sevenths and ninths in addition to the more Eastern-inspired parallel fourths (bar 19 – 22), move the score in a different direction still than games such as *The Black Onyx* and *Miracle Warriors*.

The other Master System CRPG of note is the Japanese developed *Phantasy Star* launched in 1987. Often cited as the best RPG for the system and one of the best 8-bit RPGs on any platform (Green, 2009), *Phantasy Star* holds several important cultural and historical design choices, including having one of the first female protagonists in video games named Alis (along with Samus Aran of *Metroid*) and – particularly important for console CRPGs – was one of the first to 'breakaway from dragons and ancient worlds' (Digital Chumps, 2018). Although the plot contained elements of science-fiction, it was reminiscent of *Star Wars*; science-fiction elements atop of a fantastical story with magic, weapons consisting of swords and guns, space travel and fantastical creatures. The title screen for instance is shown below in Fig. 2.19:



Fig. 2.19 - The different narrative-structural elements shown in the title screen of *Phantasy Star*.

⁴⁵ In the English translation of the original game, Adol's name was changed to Aron (Giant Bomb, 2019).

This departure from the medieval-fantasy style of *Dungeons & Dragons*, brought a certain sense of illogicality to the narrative. Consider the following: offensive weapons such as swords, maces, bows and arrows; all work logically with defensive items such as plate armour, gauntlets and shields as they are from comparable time periods in western civilization. However, allowing characters to wield guns negates the need for swords and shields; bullets from a musket, let alone a modern gun travel far in excess of human reaction speed. It therefore creates a sense of incoherence – at least from an initial setting perspective, to use Chatman’s components. Yet this blending of other narrative genres with fantasy has been continued in many JRPGs to this day and I argue that this narrative design choice brought with it a comparable decision for the game’s music. Composed by Tokuhiro Ueda, he states in the liner notes⁴⁶ to *Phantasy Star 1st Series Complete Album* CD, that it was:

the era of the economic bubble in Japan, just before the peak. It was a heady time, and there was an out-and-out frenzy for video games—and the passion for Phantasy Star too, is certainly a part of this era. The music for Phantasy Star was bound up with that enthusiasm... It’s partly why the music of Phantasy Star evokes such feelings of spirited energy, vigor, and animation. I think those of us who lived in those days can hear and feel that (shmuplations.com, N.D.).

Below in Fig. 2.20 is a transcription of the title theme with [audio track 2.07](#) providing a copy of the original music. Here, Ueda’s thoughts can clearly be seen in the music; this is not a pastiche of Western medieval music such as with Sugiyama’s work for *Dragon Quest*, but instead reflects much more the J-Pop opening of an anime like *Neon Genesis Evangelion* with its driving percussion, dotted rhythms and clear discernable melody made up of two and four-bar phrases.

⁴⁶ These have been translated by the creator of the website *Shmuplations*.

♩=150

5

9

13

Fig. 2.20 – Transcription of the “Main Title” to *Phantasy Star* by Tokuhiro Uwabo

If coherence in the game was to be maintained – despite the illogicality of the narrative genre and visuals – then I argue that by extension, the *Phantasy Star*’s musical score had to diverge away from the stylistic choices found in *Ultima III* and *Dragon Quest*, towards those found in *The Black Onyx*, *Miracle Warriors* and

Ys. Slowly but surely, Barton's Golden Age is the period which saw the music of CRPGs in the West and Japan grow ever further apart, both narratively, visually and sonically.

Outside of Japan, console RPGs were still few and far between. Instead, the breadth of the genre was being developed for home computers. A significant but nowadays lesser-known game titled *Dungeon Master* was released in 1987 – originally for the Atari ST but later ported to other systems. Bringing with it a myriad of features to gameplay that would be assimilated by the industry in other games – most notably *Eye of the Beholder* in 1991 – *Dungeon Master* has historical importance when it comes to its soundtrack. This however, would only be heard on the 1991 SNES version of the game. Here, two Japanese composers – Tsukasa Tawada and Hikoshi Hashimoto – provided a score for a Western game in a synth-based rock style. This in itself is significant – suggesting that the rock-version of *Miracle Warriors* or the J-Pop inspired *Phantasy Star* were not anomalies – but instead a growing trend for Japanese composers.

Away from the game itself, the music was just as noteworthy. In 1991, FLT Games released a soundtrack album titled *Dungeon Master: The Album*, however, of the twenty-one instrumental tracks on the audio CD, only one would be from the game with the rest being by Darrell Harvey, Rex Baca and Kip Martin drawing upon *Dungeon Master* (the box art is shown below in Fig. 2.21) as inspiration.



Fig. 2.21 - *Dungeon Master: The Album* CD Cover

This would prove to be somewhat of an anomaly within WRPg titles; a concept album made up of a series of tracks that were inspired because of a game. Notable examples exist in several JRPGs, not just in famous

titles such as *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy*, but in other games such as the album *MOTHER* in 1989.⁴⁷ Consequently, *Dungeon Master: The Album* has become something of a rarity for WRPGs.

Following Sega's lead with the release of the *Sega Mega Drive* (or *Genesis* as it was known in the US), Nintendo released their next generation *Super Nintendo Entertainment System* in Japan in 1990. Capable of having eight 16-bit voices being played concurrently – in addition to various effects such as reverb – the SNES would become the platform of choice for many notable console RPGs. Amongst earlier titles on the SNES that fit Barton's "Golden Age Part I", are two further iterations of the *Final Fantasy* franchise – *Final Fantasy IV* and V.

Final Fantasy IV (*Final Fantasy II* in the US) was released in 1991 and was the first title in the franchise to come to this new 'next-generation' console. As with the previous titles, Nobuo Uematsu provided the score, although the process of composing for the new hardware was not without difficulties (Uematsu, 1991). According to Julianne Grasso (2019, p. 105), the game consists of '44 brief musical loops made with synthesized instruments'. Amongst these, there are none that have as much historical importance as the "Theme of Love". In a 2004 article, IGN revealed that following a report in the Japanese "Sankei Sports" newspaper, that 'Japanese grade school students will soon be getting a dose of Final Fantasy as part of their required curriculum. According to the paper, starting in Spring of 2005, music textbooks used by sixth graders will include "Theme of Love" from *Final Fantasy IV*' (Hitmitsu, 2004).

Below in Fig. 2.22 (and heard in [audio track 2.08](#)) is a transcription based on the SNES version of the track and credit should be given to the creator of "ff4-Theme_of_Love.mid" from *Final Fantasy Shrine*⁴⁸ from which this transcription is based. It is immediately apparent in the transcription of the technological advance between the NES and SNES sound-chip and the opportunities it afforded Uematsu. Gone is the three-part texture, with Uematsu able to write for sounds that appear much closer to the timbres of flute, harp and strings. Whilst the flute and harp are mainly monophonic in texture, the strings are afforded up to four-note homophony which were impossible on the NES. These string parts can be heard across the musical score for the game, utilised as blanket textures in much the same way that a synth would play chords within a rock band to fill out the harmony or to double a melody. Stylistically, the piece bears many similarities to lush romantic music or perhaps themes used to accompany certain female characters⁴⁹ heard in both ballet and Hollywood film soundtracks. Identifying markers include the wide melodic interval found in bar two, four and six (reminiscent of the ascending major 6th interval found at the start of comparable cues by John Williams for instance 'Princess Leia's Theme' or 'Across the Stars' from the *Star Wars* saga (dir. Lucas, 1977/2002) or

⁴⁷ In this album, English vocals were combined with the Japanese arrangements of the Japanese original music of *Mother*. For further information on the music in this non-fantasy CRPG, Tim Summer's chapter 'Mother/Earthbound Zero and the Power of the Naïve Aesthetic' (2019) should be consulted.

⁴⁸ https://www.ffshrine.org/ff4/ff4_midis.php

⁴⁹ For further information on the use of the Feminine Romantic Cliché, Rebecca Fulop's 2012 PhD dissertation 'Heroes, Dames and Damsels in Distress' can be consulted.

the love theme to *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (dir. Spielberg, 1981)) which resolves into a lyrical melody – first heard on flute and then accompanied at the climax by strings in octaves as Tchaikovsky uses in his ‘Love Theme’ from *Romeo and Juliet*. A harp arpeggio (which work almost as glissandi) at b.17 leading into the next section, reminiscent of how composers like Max Steiner for instance introduces the love interest Gina in *Cloak and Dagger* (dir. Lang, 1946).

♩ = 75

Flute

Harp

7

Fl.

Hp.

Str.

12

Fl.

Hp.

Str.

2

17

Fl.

Hp.

Str.

20

23

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: Flute (Fl.), Harp (Hp.), and Strings (Str.). The score is divided into three systems, each containing three staves. The first system starts at measure 17, the second at measure 20, and the third at measure 23. The Flute part features a melodic line with various note values and rests. The Harp part consists of arpeggiated chords, often marked with triplets. The Strings part provides a harmonic foundation with sustained chords and some melodic movement. The score is written in a standard musical notation style with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature.

Fig. 2.22 - Transcription of "Theme of Love" from *Final Fantasy IV* by Nobuo Uematsu

Despite cues such as *Final Fantasy IV*'s chocobo theme⁵⁰ having a samba-like vibe with whistles and a heavy percussion section, Uematsu's 'Theme of Love' is still part of the game's arguably filmic, orchestrally-stylised score in nature, albeit one where the stylistic tendencies of each cue vary such as the music used to accompany the airship containing an energetic drum-beat and driving synth-bass line in a manner very similar to 'Bastian's Flight' from *The Neverending Story* by Giorgio Moroder⁵¹.

Another of the more revealing aspects in regards to the significance of the music to *Final Fantasy IV*, is arguably away from the game itself. On April 21, 1992, Square Brand/NTT Publishing released *Piano Collections: "Final Fantasy IV"*. This was made up of two parts: an official CD and more importantly a hardback book of the notated arrangements – the cover of such is presented below in Fig. 2.23. Certainly, other CRPGs had released audio arrangements before this – either on vinyl, cassette or CD – but to publish musical arrangements in the form of sheet music is notable. This was a major JRPG developer engaging with an established print-form publisher in allowing fans the ability to engage with the music in a way that had not been done before. This was the first *Piano Collections* released⁵² and by doing so, it suggests that the cues that Uematsu had written were thought to be melodically interesting enough to garner fan attention.



Fig. 2.23 – The CD and Hardback Sheet Music Book for *Piano Collections: Final Fantasy IV*

⁵⁰ A large yellow bird similar to an ostrich that players can ride as a form of transport. Whilst all main numbered games in the *Final Fantasy* franchise are separate worlds and contain their own unique narratives, several staples are the same across all the iterations of which the chocobo is one. Consequently, this theme is re-arranged in each iteration.

⁵¹ Sean Atkinson's article 2019 'Soaring Through the Sky: Topics and Tropes in Video Game Music' details more on this topic.

⁵² *Final Fantasy I – III* was not afforded the same treatment.

Sheet music for anime had been published for quite some time before this with these pieces sharing – for the most part – a thematic or memorable melody. What makes a memorable melody is a highly contested point of course – as Jack Perricone (2000) states in his introduction to his book *Melody in Songwriting*, ‘unlike harmony, no theories of melody have been sufficiently codified to become a part of academia’ (p. ix). Added to this, is that stylistically and culturally, melody – in terms of a horizontal line made up of a combination of pitch and rhythm – is of variable significance in some styles and cultures than it is in others. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to suggest that traditional Japanese music emphasises melody and singing (Boleat, 2011, p. 194) and – as is discussed further in Chapter Four – Japanese multimedia has taken much from the West, including the use of melody which as seen in this canonical study to date, is distinctly Western in style. As such, fans would want to re-interpret the melodies and the thematic nature of Uematsu’s cues were obviously enough for the arrangers – Shirou Satou and Osamu Saitou – to produce fourteen pieces. We can use this as evidence to suggest that Uematsu’s writing of cues for the *Final Fantasy* games is distinctly melodic. With *Final Fantasy* in such a prominent position within Japanese role-playing game design, it can be suggested that for players of JRPGs, a coherent score would be a thematic one where a clear and memorable melody is supported by other musical elements such as timbre and harmony.

Square released *Final Fantasy V* only a year later in December 1992. Once again, Nobuo Uematsu scored the music and in an interview with the website IGN states a remarkable thought process that would come to be a huge milestone in the soundtracks for JRPGs; that of musical style:

In Japan, as we progressed in the Final Fantasy series from IV and then to V, the music was not full-fledged orchestral music and therefore I felt that maybe it was okay that it's not orchestral music. It could be rock music or whatever. It might even be ethnic music that is incorporated. It could be any kind of music. That was the time that I felt really liberated, I felt that I could be really flexible in creating the music and I really had a hard, yet wonderful experience (Uematsu, 2004).

As alluded to above, as much as the style of Uematsu’s writing had begun to change, the choice of timbre was for the most part orchestral. Uematsu’s influence on JRPG soundtracks at this point was unarguable – by 1992, sales of Uematsu-scored games had reached over 5.5 million copies (Fandom, 2020). As stated above, there were several previous examples of composers moving away from the typical orchestral sounds into different genres, however, Sugiyama and Uematsu were arguably the most famous JRPG composers and for one of them to make a conscious decision to stylistically divert his music away from the orchestra-inspired scores he had written previously is telling. Further information on this will be discussed in Chapter Four, but by this point in this canonical history, the foundations of style and timbre of the music of the JRPG (perhaps to this day) had been cemented. Significantly, the piece below in Fig. 2.24 and in [audio track 2.09](#) showcases this. Titled “Dear Friends”, this piece would later be used as the title piece in the 2004 concert tour known as “Dear Friends – Music from Final Fantasy” due to Uematsu wanting to ‘reflect his appreciation for the

overwhelming support that he has received from his fans, music lovers, and video game players alike' (Square Enix USA – Public Relations Team, 2004).

In its original form however, it is heard in its entirety only a single time in *Final Fantasy V* once the heroes have beaten the final boss “Neo Exdeath”. At this point, a cutscene ends the game and “Dear Friends” plays over the first section of it. The timbres allowed on the SNES audio chip allowed Uematsu to create an acoustic guitar and flute duet, with the acoustic guitar playing one loop of the piece before the flute enters. Notice the bitter-sweet duality between the Am sections (i.e. bars 5 – 13) and the tonic major to A major from 14 onwards reflecting the narrative of the epilogue as characters visit graves of fallen friends. Due to the instruments Uematsu chose in addition to the lyrical melody, plucked in the upper voice of the guitar, the piece has a folk-like feel; suggesting that he did not feel it necessary to conclude an epic fantasy game with a triumphant piece of orchestral music.

$\text{♩} = 81$ *Play on D.C. only*

Flute

Acoustic Guitar

6

Fl.

A. Gtr.

11

Fl.

A. Gtr.

16

Fl.

A. Gtr.

22

Fl.

A. Gtr.

27

Fl.

A. Gtr.

D.C.

The image displays a musical score for the track "Dear Friends" from Final Fantasy V, composed by Nobuo Uematsu. The score is written for Flute (Fl.) and Acoustic Guitar (A. Gtr.). It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 81 and a performance instruction "Play on D.C. only". The key signature is D major (two sharps). The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 6, 11, 16, 22, and 27 indicated at the start of each system. The Flute part features a melodic line with various intervals and rests, while the Acoustic Guitar provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and arpeggiated patterns. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the instruction "D.C." (Da Capo).

Fig. 2.24 – Transcription of “Dear Friends” from *Final Fantasy V* by Nobuo Uematsu.

As described above, whilst this was not the first game to deviate away from the orchestral timbre that had been traditional to this point, Uematsu’s score for *Final Fantasy V* is perhaps the most prominent to do so.

As such, it is a milestone within JRPG score design and something that would set the trend in JRPG music ever more.

With most Western studios of the time continuing in the vein of the *Dungeons & Dragons* style, Westwood Studios's release of *Lands of Lore: The Throne of Chaos* stands out. Focusing on story, the game deviated from many of its Western contemporaries with bright and colourful graphics, a stylistic feature arguably more similar to that of JRPGs than its Western counterparts. Whilst the music in the game – composed by Paul Mudra, Frank Klepacki and Dwight Okahara – still reflected the quasi-medieval pastiche that the game's narrative structure portrayed, it is interesting to realise the transmission that the geo-cultural centres of game design were having upon one another.

At the end of Barton's Golden Age Part I, there is a definite sense that the musical accompaniment to these CRPGs was starting to show signs of fragmentation across the JRPG and WRPg divide. For composers in the West, a pastiche of the Western classical tradition was the norm particularly when it came to orchestral timbres. Meanwhile, games such as *Ys*, *Phantasy Star* and *Final Fantasy V* had begun to take the music for JRPGs in new directions as anime had done before it, with styles such as prog-rock, J-Pop and more with different choices of instrumentation made possible by technological advances in video game hardware. This also links to the diversity of the narratives of these titles. These are no longer the *Dungeons & Dragons*-based role-playing games that CRPGs had emulated initially. Instead, these were games whose narratives featured a myriad of styles fused together including science-fiction and horror. There are also the beginnings of a full array of cues that would meet Chatman's components of a narrative, with 'Feena's Theme' in *Ys* acting as one of the first video game character themes that would be used as a leitmotif. Whilst these are often built around Hollywood musical clichés, there is a sense of coherency in doing so. For WRPgS, setting and actions still were the primary focus, but for JRPGs – which would build on this in Barton's Golden Age Part II – characters and their relationships were gaining importance. Music built around them – most notably the love theme of *Final Fantasy IV*, were again helping to shape the diversity of JRPGs. As such, when all of these differences are taken as a whole, the "eight melody" template of *Ultima III* leading to *Dragon Quest* does not satisfactorily model the music found in these contemporary titles, with WRPgS expanding on the model and JRPGs diverging away from it, as their narratives move away from the traditional castles, towns and dungeons to incorporate science-fiction and other narrative elements. Consequently, we are at a point where the term coherence is now substantially different between the two forms of CRPG that this thesis is considering and this will only widen further as we progress into Barton's Golden Age Part II and then the Platinum Age.

As a final point, there is a small, but notable distinction now in the music for the ludic sub-genres of the CRPG. For turn-based CRPGs such as the *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy* series, stingers – fulfilling Chatman's 'happenings' – are now ubiquitous, particularly for entering combat, victory and death. Action-RPGs, are less likely to use these intermediary changes to game state; *Ys* for instance had no change at all to the music

when fighting or defeating monsters in the overworld. That is not to say that there are no stingers at all in Action-RPGs, just that there can be notable differences.

2.4.6 The Golden Age Part II: 1993 – 1996

During Barton's Golden Age Part II, evolution in the CRPG would come from consoles, in particular the SNES but also from the Sega Genesis and the arrival of Sony's *PlayStation* console when it was released in Japan in December 1994.

To begin an overview of this period, it is crucial to begin with *Secret of Mana* (*Seiken Densetu 2* in Japan) released for the SNES in 1993. This game had a narrative structure set in a high fantasy world containing a mystical energy source known as "mana" that has all but been lost to humanity. The game tells the story of an evil empire trying to restore mana in order to make use of its power to resurrect an ancient flying fortress which is powered from it. The player controls a trio of characters, all of whom have their backstories explored as the game unfolds where they seek to stop the empire – and the mastermind behind it – from gaining control of the fortress.

The music for the game was composed and produced by Hiroki Kikuta; his first video game soundtrack. Whilst the ludic design of the game called for standard CRPG tracks – battle themes, area themes etcetera – the game's setting of a high fantasy world where nature is very much pushed to the fore, mixed with touches of science fiction such as the floating battleship fortress – allowed Kikuta to follow the trend outlined so far in creating a score that does not stick to either one style of music or indeed, one homogenised timbre – something he acknowledges himself, stating that style does not matter (RocketBaby, 2001). As an example, the cue "Together Always" has a marimba style ostinato figure, combined with electric bass, electric piano, a harmonica melody line and a flute melody in the B section. Another cue – "One of Them is Hope" – features electric guitar, strings, tubular bell and synth. The score in its entirety passes through multiple styles including progressive-rock, jazz, and other more ethnically diverse styles and timbres such as hints of Javanese gamelan. Of the more expected orchestral tracks, the compositional pastiche is generally of the Romantic period, more often than not eschewing brass in favour of woodwind, harp, piano, strings and light percussion. Lyrical melodies and ostinato-based accompaniments are often the main feature. Several other notable features emerged from Kikuta's score as discussed by Simon Elchlepp. Kikuta would 'modulate far more often than one would hear on a typical game score' (Elchlepp, N.D.) allowing for a track that did not feel constrained by a sense of key.

To reinforce the point on the game's constant use of the theme of nature and how important Kikuta's score was felt to be, the game's introductory music is worth looking at in a little more detail. Once the game has been powered up, a predictable logo screen stating "Squaresoft" appears in white text on a black background. This is followed by a synthesized – but sufficiently recognisable – sound effect; that of a whale

call, an apparent technical challenge in its own right but one Kikuta felt brought the player into the story before the game had even begun (Jeriaska, 2009). Only once this has finished does the title screen appear with its logo towards the top of the screen and copyright information below. Between them however, is rolling credits of the main production roles. The second credit reads, “Composed by H. Kikuta” highlighting how important the role of the composer was to the final product in enhancing the intricate story threads of the natural world and magic together with science and technology together. This is shown below in Fig. 2.25:

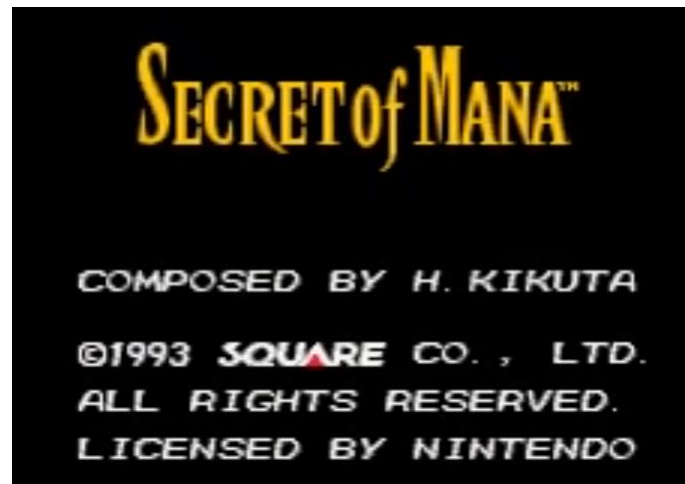


Fig. 2.25 – *Secret of Mana* Title Screen showing the second credit – “Composed by H. Kikuta”

The title screen is accompanied not by a rousing nationalistic feel like with *Final Fantasy*, or the medieval-style of *Dungeons & Dragons* based WRPGs but instead by the cue ‘Fear of the Heavens’⁵³ (sometimes translated to ‘Fear of the Angels’) – a lush, almost ethereal score featuring a piano melody with a heavy amount of reverb accompanied by strings, a solitary flute and electric bass. See **Appendix 2.5** and [audio track 2.10](#). The combination of the electric and the acoustic provides the contrast between the duality of the advanced technology and the natural world that the game’s narrative is trying to portray.

Secret of Mana’s score continues in the mould of previous JRPGs to this point. Amalgamating an eclectic variety of styles, with a wide variety of timbres; a clear musical response to the amalgamation of narrative themes. This is a distinctly non-homogenous musical soundtrack, focusing on a clear melody and accompaniment that was evident across *Final Fantasy V* and many anime scores. As with previous JRPG, the various cues would loop leading to a lot of repetition which would undoubtedly lead to future generations of players remembering this with a high degree of nostalgia; something that many of the theories listed in Chapter One require, particularly Huron’s Theory of Expectation and Kizzire and Ivănescu’s Nostalgia Theories.

The developer and publisher *Square* continued to release CRPGs the following year when they released *Final Fantasy VI* (*Final Fantasy III* in the US due to *Final Fantasy II*, *III* and *V* not being ported) in April 1994.

⁵³ ‘Fear of the Heavens’ was incorporated into the set-list of the third Orchestral Game Concert that was held in 1993.

The narrative structure sees the game set in a fantasy world amidst ‘a “steampunk” aesthetic that evokes an industrializing 19th Century Europe, augmented by robotics, genetic engineering and re-emergent magic’ (Hourigan, 2005) – similar somewhat to that of *Secret of Mana*. This duality between science and magic would result in a rebellion against an evil empire, the use of magical and scientific weapons, encounters with gods, apocalyptic destruction of the world and rebirth. Fourteen playable characters are used in the telling of the story, each with their own back story including a half-human-half-esper girl,⁵⁴ a treasure hunter, a military general, a martial artist, a ninja mercenary and a mimic. For these characters, their ‘individual rehabilitation and social reintegration are articulated in terms of their place within the party’ (ibid). Notable scenes within the game see the principal antagonist commit genocide through a poisoned water supply, an acted-out opera⁵⁵ involving an evil octopus, and a confrontation on a floating continent. As such, it is obvious that *Final Fantasy VI* has an extremely eclectic mix of themes, both in style and timbre. For the music, Nobuo Uematsu returned to score the game, including typical archetypes by then such as incidental environmental music, battle themes, cutscene music and boss themes. In addition to this was his use of the leitmotif – arguably a necessity given how many principal characters existed in much the same way that Wagner first approached this device for his *Ring Cycle*.

It is Uematsu’s use of leitmotifs that is arguably the most notable part of his score for the game with ‘each character [having] its own theme which can appear in traditional or reversed form’ (Defazio, 2006). Of all of these, it is “Terra’s Theme” – named after the half-human-half esper character – that is most used throughout the game. It is first heard in the guise of the cue “Omen” during the game’s opening credit-crawl with three people – including Terra at the back – in robot suits as they make their way through a snowy mountain scene – as shown in Fig. 2.26:



Fig. 2.26 - Opening Credit Crawl of *Final Fantasy VI* where “Omen” – the first guise of “Terra’s Theme” – is played.

⁵⁴ An esper is a creature meant to have psychic or paranormal abilities.

⁵⁵ See Cheng (2014), for an account of the opera scene.

“Terra’s Theme” is perhaps the most prominent of all the leitmotifs found in *Final Fantasy VI*’s score due to it being the game’s main theme. It is a leitmotif rather than just a character theme for it is not used in only its original form; as the story progresses, it is heard in a variety of guises such as in the track “Awakening”, “Save the Espers!” and the game’s “Ending Theme”. **Appendix 2.6** shows a transcription of “Terra’s Theme” (with the original audio heard in [audio track 2.11](#)). Notice the duality between the standard orchestra strings, brass and wind (albeit a panpipe timbre rather than flute) against the prominent acoustic and synthesized percussion; an obvious reflection upon the game’s narrative structure of magic and industry. The use of the pan-pipe however, does create a unique sound that is arguably reminiscent of the shakuhachi and thus giving the game a certain sense of Japanese cultural identity to its music even if much of it is rooted in Western origins. Additionally, its militaristic snare drum underpinning much of the piece gives a march-like feel suiting how the player first meets Terra and how it is easily suited to be the game’s “overworld theme” where the player would make continuous journeys across the world map. Leitmotifs – and particularly character themes – would go on to become a key feature of Uematsu’s writing for most of his future score-writing within the *Final Fantasy* series; shaping many of the soundtracks that he would go on to write and as such being somewhat of a cultural influencer on the landscape of JRPGs.

Whilst many of the CRPGs released in Barton’s Golden Age Part II were released on the SNES, there were a few notable exceptions. Sega released an add-on named the “Mega-CD” (“Sega CD” in the US) for the *Genesis/Mega Drive* in 1991 in the wake of the compact-disc becoming a viable storage medium that offered many times the capacity of the cartridges of the time and Sony parted ways from Nintendo to do a very similar project for the SNES; ultimately resulting in Sony releasing the original *PlayStation*. It was not until December 1994 however, when a critically and commercially well received CRPG was released for the Mega CD – *Lunar: Eternal Blue* (with the box art shown in Fig. 2.27⁵⁶) by the development studio Game Arts. A sequel to *Lunar: The Silver Star*, the game is a traditional top-down CRPG with a narrative structure based on a fantasy setting and a typical “Hero’s Journey” narrative which follows the exploits of Hiro – a young swordsman and adventurer - and his companion Ruby – a pink winged cat-like creature. Featuring anime visuals and almost an hour worth of cutscenes, the plot was written by the novelist Kei Shigema who had also worked on the prequel. Noriyuki Iwadare – the composer of both *Eternal Blue* and *Silver Star* – created a score where the majority of the tracks featured lush orchestration; sometimes with notable J-Pop elements such as a prominent bass line and rock beat (for example “Adventure Road”) and sometimes featuring more well-established medieval-style fantasy with an appropriate timbre (for example “Larpa”). Stylistically, many of the musical cues heard within the score draw upon other forms of musical culture instead of utilising only the Western classical and Hollywood traditions.

⁵⁶ The anime aesthetic was present on both the Japanese and international versions in contrast to *Dragon Quest* in which only the Japanese release showcased this style (see above).



Fig. 2.27 - The US box art for *Lunar: Eternal Blue* for the Mega CD with its anime-style visual aesthetic

Fig. 2.28 ([audio track 2.12](#)) showcases this J-Pop inspiration with a transcription of the cue ‘Adventure Road’ with the following transcription in Fig. 2.29 ([audio track 2.13](#)) of ‘Larpa’. In ‘Adventure Road’, notice the rich orchestration reminiscent of J-Pop arranging with the bass guitar, drums and synthesiser (Chiu, 2005). This is no coincidence – an arrangement of the track was made into a song with vocals by Hikaru Midorikawa – the Japanese voice actor for Hiro. Meanwhile in ‘Larpa’, we see a more traditional cue, similar to that of WRPGs with a pastiche of European folk melodies: a 6/8 rhythm, open 5th harmony and an expected choice of timbre such as flute, fiddle and hand drum. In both examples however, a thematic melody is recognisable, building upon work found in previous JRPGs and providing distinct contrast to games such as *Secret of Evermore* with its far more ambient soundscape that would be released just a year later.

The cue ‘Adventure Road’ – whilst a major theme within the score due to how often it was heard – is not the main theme. Nevertheless, Iwadare composed a melody to the extent that a vocal performance could be created from it. Meanwhile in ‘Larpa’ – in much the same way that European folk music would have easily recognisable melodies – this too has a clear melody. In both examples, there are similarities with many SNES tracks previously shown; clear lyrical melodies make the pieces very recognisable after just a few times played and would become another feature of musical score design that would divide music for JRPGs and WRPGs. This however, does lead to a criticism of CRPG tracks in general, but arguably particularly in the case of JRPGs; that of repetition fatigue.⁵⁷ Both the cues chosen here have the potential to suffer from it, but particularly in the case of ‘Adventure Road’ which lasts for only 44 seconds and consists of 24 bars. For CRPGs developed later, this would be a feature that some composers would actively try to avoid.

⁵⁷ Winifred Phillips defines repetition fatigue as something that ‘occurs when a memorable or recognizable melody ceases to be entertaining and becomes an annoyance, either because the repeating track in which the melody appears is too short, or the track itself is repeated too often (Phillips, 2014, pp. 66 – 67).

$\text{♩} = 132$

Flute

Brass *f*

Synth Brass *mf*

Piano *f*

Synth Strings *f*

Pad 5 (Bowed) *f*

Strings *f*

Electric Bass *f*

Drum Set *f*

$\text{♩} = 132$



7

Fl. *mf*

Syn. Br.

Syn. Br. *p*

Pno. *mp*

Syn. Str. *mp*

Pad 5 *mf*

Str.

E. Bass *mf*

Dr. *mf*

2 ¹³

Fl.

Syn. Br.

Syn. Br.

Pno.

Syn. Str.

Pad 5

Str.

E. Bass

Dr.



¹⁹

Fl.

Syn. Br.

Syn. Br.

Pno.

Syn. Str.

Pad 5

Str.

E. Bass

Dr.

Fig. 2.28 – Transcription of “Adventure Road” from *Lunar: Eternal Blue* by Noriyuki Iwadare

$\text{♩} = 70$ §

Flute

English Horn

Bassoon

Hand Drums

Tambourine

Fiddle

Strings

Double Bass

Lower 2nd time

2nd time only

7

Fl.

Eng. Hn.

Bsn.

H. Drums

Tamb.

Fid.

Str.

Db.

2nd time only

pizz

Play

Musical score for measures 13-17 of "Larpa". The score is written for a woodwind and percussion ensemble. The instruments are Flute (Fl.), English Horn (Eng. Hn.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horns (H. Drums), Tambourine (Tamb.), Fiddle (Fid.), Strings (Str.), and Double Bass (Db.). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. The score features a complex rhythmic pattern with many eighth and sixteenth notes. The Flute and English Horn parts are melodic, while the Bassoon, Horns, Fiddle, and Strings provide harmonic support. The Double Bass part is a simple bass line. The Tambourine part is a rhythmic accompaniment. The score ends with a double bar line.



Musical score for measures 18-22 of "Larpa". The score is written for a woodwind and percussion ensemble. The instruments are Flute (Fl.), English Horn (Eng. Hn.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horns (H. Drums), Tambourine (Tamb.), Fiddle (Fid.), Strings (Str.), and Double Bass (Db.). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. The score features a complex rhythmic pattern with many eighth and sixteenth notes. The Flute and English Horn parts are melodic, while the Bassoon, Horns, Fiddle, and Strings provide harmonic support. The Double Bass part is a simple bass line. The Tambourine part is a rhythmic accompaniment. The score includes a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.) for the Flute and English Horn parts. The score ends with a double bar line.

Fig. 2.29 - Transcription of "Larpa" from *Lunar: Eternal Blue* by Noriyuki Iwadare

Ultimately, this is but another example of the stylistic variance in cues found within JRPGs at this point in history. Whilst the medievalism of “Larpa” could perhaps fit within a quasi-medieval CRPG like earlier *Dragon Quest* titles, “Adventure Road” would be almost impossible to be cohesive within that narrative style. Instead, this piece fits more comfortably within the more illogical-narrative of the more modern genre-blurring JRPG.

In 1995, Yasunori Mitsuda – the composer for the game *Chrono Trigger* – aimed to combat the psychological conundrum of continuing the melody-dominated cue of other JRPGs, but without suffering from repetition fatigue. In a conversation with *Gamest* magazine, Mitsuda stated, ‘The number one goal this time was to make something that you could listen to over and over without getting sick of it, so each piece is really long’ (Mitsuda, 1995). As such – and in contrast to the relatively short musical pieces shown above in *Lunar: Eternal Blue* – Mitsuda aimed to make sure that every piece was at least two minutes in length. Once again, *Chrono Trigger* features a typical “Hero’s Journey” narrative and its plot is a fantastical story with sci-fi elements centred round the passage and manipulation of time. The plot of *Chrono Trigger* takes place on an Earth-like planet with many similar time periods. As can be surmised by the term ‘chrono’ in the game’s name, travelling through time will lead the player to a whole host of locations and environments, from prehistoric times where dinosaurs roam the world, through to a quasi-medieval period to a post-apocalyptic future with sentient robots. To help represent these locations, Mitsuda aimed to provide a score that would transcend traditional boundaries, stating ‘I wanted to create music that wouldn’t fit into any established genre... music of an imaginary world.’⁵⁸ The game’s director, Masato Kato, was my close friend, and so I’d always talk with him about the setting and the scene before going into writing’ (Kohler, 2004, p. 140). It is perhaps understandable given the nature of this quotation to explain that before becoming composer for *Chrono Trigger*, Mitsuda was sound programmer for several other Square games including *Final Fantasy V*, where he worked with Nobuo Uematsu.⁵⁹ Therefore, once again due to Square, the course of JRPG music would be further diverted from a path of a homogenous musical style to one where difference was not only a necessity thanks to the narrative structure, but one actively sought after by the composers of this generation.

Fig. 2.28 (audio track 2.14) is a transcription of “Morning Sunlight” from the game, based on the importing of a .spc⁶⁰ file into Avid’s *Sibelius Ultimate* 2018.11. Whilst not particularly long on its own – lasting only 37 seconds, it is generally heard together in tandem with “Peaceful Days” which is 1:38. Additionally, whilst not out of the ordinary in terms of musical style; woodwind, strings and harp – very reminiscent of Kikuta’s *Secret of Mana* score (where Mitsuda was sound designer), the harmonic language adheres to Mitsuda’s earlier comments of music not fitting into any established genre. The chord symbols are shown above the string

⁵⁸ In addition to the traditional setting and event-based tracks, Mitsuda wrote a number of character themes, further strengthening the use of the importance of these types of video game musical cue in JRPGs.

⁵⁹ During the course of the project, Mitsuda became ill and could not finish all the pieces, so Uematsu was brought into complete the scoring for the game.

⁶⁰ A .spc file is a Super Nintendo Audio Data file. See <https://www.filedesc.com/en/file/spc> [Accessed Aug 2020].

part; notice how Mitsuda avoids any standard triad until the very final chord. Whilst arguably closer to Western Romantic-period music, this track is typical of this type of piece heard in JRPGs with its rich colouring of harmonies (similar to Feena's theme) and chordal writing.

The musical score is divided into three systems, each spanning three measures. The tempo is marked as ♩=56. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C).

- System 1 (Measures 1-3):**
 - Flute:** Measures 1 and 2 are rests. In measure 3, it plays a half note F#4.
 - Oboe:** Measures 1 and 2 are rests. In measure 3, it plays a half note D4.
 - Harp:** Plays a continuous eighth-note arpeggiated pattern throughout all three measures.
 - Strings:**
 - Measure 1: Chord Cmaj7 (C4, E4, G4, Bb4).
 - Measure 2: Chord Fmaj9(omit5) (F4, A4, C5, E5, G5).
 - Measure 3: Chord Cmaj7 (C4, E4, G4, Bb4).
- System 2 (Measures 4-6):**
 - Flute:** Measure 4 has a four-measure rest. In measure 5, it plays a half note F#4. In measure 6, it plays a half note D4.
 - Oboe:** Measures 4 and 5 have a four-measure rest. In measure 6, it plays a half note D4.
 - Harp:** Continues the eighth-note arpeggiated pattern.
 - Strings:**
 - Measure 4: Chord Fmaj9(omit5) (F4, A4, C5, E5, G5).
 - Measure 5: Chord Em9(omit5) (E4, G4, Bb4, D5, F5).
 - Measure 6: Chord Am7 (A4, C5, E5, G5).
- System 3 (Measures 7-9):**
 - Flute:** Measure 7 has a four-measure rest. In measure 8, it plays a half note F#4. In measure 9, it plays a half note D4.
 - Oboe:** Measures 7 and 8 have a four-measure rest. In measure 9, it plays a half note D4.
 - Harp:** Continues the eighth-note arpeggiated pattern.
 - Strings:**
 - Measure 7: Chord Bbmaj7 (Bb4, D5, F5, Ab5).
 - Measure 8: Chord A (A4, C5, E5, G5).
 - Measure 9: Chord A (A4, C5, E5, G5).

Fig. 2.30 – Transcription based off the .spc file to ‘Morning Sunlight’ from *Chrono Trigger* by Yasunori Mitsuda.

Chrono Trigger continues in the vein of *Final Fantasy V*, *Lunar: Eternal Blue* and *Secret of Mana* in creating a non-homogenous musical score where musical style and sonic timbres change drastically from cue to cue. The narrative combines the fantasy genre with additional elements again; strengthening this JRPG storytelling that is so different to WRPGs and one which impacts drastically on its accompanying musical score. Coherence is arguably achieved through this lack of homogeneity in narrative, visuals and audio – where if the narrative can go anywhere, then so can the musical score design.

Secret of Evermore presents an intriguing picture of a game that crosses a cultural divide. Released in the US on October 1, 1995, *Secret of Evermore* was developed by Square designers in the USA (the development team was called Squaresoft), rather than the company's headquarters in Japan which makes it unique amongst all Square games. Although having "Secret of" as part of the title, this is not part of the *Mana* series as described above. Instead, the game focuses on a teenage boy and his shapeshifting dog who are suddenly transported to a fantasy world named "Evermore" after tampering with a machine they find in an abandoned laboratory where he lives – a fictional US town called Podunk. This world has distinct areas known as "realms" in which each one represents a period of real-world history such as "Antiqua" which is based on Ancient Rome and "Gothica" which represents the Middle Ages. Other areas include the Great Pyramid and even a trip to a space station. Consequently, the plot sees the boy travelling from area to area, rescuing other citizens from Podunk who have also been transported there over the years.

The music to the game was written by Jeremy Soule – his very first video game score having been hired by Squaresoft after finishing high school after sending them a mixtape submission. According to Alan Weiss – the producer and designer of the game – Soule's compositions were 'a mix of John Barry (James Bond, lots of movie soundtracks) and John Williams (Star Wars and - wait for it, Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea)' (Weiss, 2014). Nevertheless, for the score to *Secret of Evermore*, Soule approached it much differently from his demo reel. Due to software limitations, writing faster-tempo music resulted in the entire game slowing down when Soule tried to import the music into the game (Soule, 2007). As such, he designed a score that 'had the weirdest Squaresoft music they had ever heard because I used a lot of ambient sounds and a lot of low-key music' (Soule, 2006).

This 'ambience', as described by Soule features all the traits of the definition in section 2.1.1. Long slow melodies are heard over blanket chords, often with the metre disrupted by ties across the barlines or through rhythmic displacement. A review on the website *The Greatest Game Music* states, 'Throughout the score, Soule prefers to write for small orchestral ensembles, usually led by intimate woodwind and acoustic guitar soli. They alternate between 'mysterious' and 'quietly spellbinding' through their chromatic melody lines, which cleverly incorporate folk and jazz influences.' (Greatest Game Music, N.D.). **Appendix 2.7** ([audio track 2.15](#)) shows the track "Lonely Halls" using three ocarinas to produce a form of two beat reverb. Added to that is a string section with a very slow rate of harmonic change and a harp playing a broken chord pattern

that very rarely outlines a standard triad results in a very ambient feel. Of *Secret of Evermore*'s legacy, Peter Tieryas writes:

Secret of Evermore is one of the most underrated RPGs in gaming... it's a love letter to what is best about JRPGs, with influences from Secret of Mana and even cameos by Final Fantasy characters like Cecil from FFIV. But it also weaves its own identity with a quirky narrative encompassing fictional B-movie references and a boy and his dog tale that is as classic as it gets (Tieryas, 2014).

Unlike JRPGs such as *Ys* and *Final Fantasy VI*, this does not feature any character themes. Instead, it corresponds to the eight-melody model in its entirety, although contains numerous other cues such as desert tracks, temples and more. The narrative merging of multiple genres from medieval, to ancient to science fiction represents a typical JRPG far more than most WRPGs. Yet, through its music, this is perhaps the most western of any Japanese-developed game until arguably *Dragons Dogma*. It is a game that is perhaps the best example of a bridge between the two main styles of CRPG – a melting pot of ideas that is often overlooked. Soule meanwhile would become one of the dominant composers for Western role-playing games and it is no surprise that the ambience he created with *Secret of Evermore* would become the norm for many of his scores to WRPGs in the future.

The final two noteworthy CRPGs in respect to their music that fall into Barton's Golden Age are also JRPGs and were both released on the same day – December 15, 1995; *Tales of Phantasia* and *Suikoden*. Beginning with *Tales of Phantasia* – released originally on the SNES – this would become the first game released in Namco's *Tales* series – a multimedia franchise involving spin-off games, an anime series, manga and audio dramas that continues to date. In 2006 it was cited as the third biggest RPG series in Japan, behind *Final Fantasy* and *Dragon Quest* (Parish, 2006). *Tales of Phantasia* moved away somewhat from the typical "Hero's Journey" narrative theory by having multiple protagonists across different time periods which would interact with one another as the plot necessitated. The game's plot was arguably not as elaborate as *Chrono Trigger* – forgoing more of the sci-fi elements in order to keep the game with a more generic fantastical tone. Visually, the game had comprehensive links to anime and this relationship extended to the music of the game as well. For the game's soundtrack, the development studio (Wolf Team) had an in-house compositional team. For *Tales of Phantasia* the composer Motoi Sakuraba led the team which also consisted of Shinji Tamura and Ryōta Furuya. Already a prolific composer, Sakuraba's involvement with the *Tales* series (he became a free-lance composer not long afterwards due to internal conflicts between the developer and publisher) made him one of the most sought-after composers for video game music in Japan.

As was starting to become traditional for JRPGs (for example in the *Lunar* series), the game featured several songs within it rather than featuring an instrumental score alone⁶¹. The songs were in a distinctly J-Pop style

⁶¹ The SNES version of *Tales of Phantasia* was one of the only cartridge-based game to contain a recorded vocal track.

(albeit without being actually staged and choreographed), such as the opening song “Yume wa Owaranai” with lyrics by Shoko Fujibayashi and music by Toshiyuki Sekiguchi. The song was only heard in the Japanese release of the game however. As a whole, the game’s score has once again, a very eclectic mix of musical styles in it – as one commentator writes, ‘It’s quite clear these guys were aiming far more for simply what sounded good, rather than adhering to any single musical genre, or style for that matter’ (Soujiro, 1999). Once again, homogeny is not an aim and this is particularly evident in the battle themes. **Appendix 2.8** ([audio track 2.16](#)) shows a transcription of “Take Up the Cross” which is the primary battle theme heard in the game. The composition team again removes any link to the quasi-medieval setting of the game. Instead, synths abound with strings and brass combined with bass and synth harp. What is left is a hugely energetic, bombastic piece that attempts to signpost the urgency of battle rather than attempting to fit within the game’s narrative structure. Interestingly, it was not released in English until 2006 as a port for the Game Boy Advance and after seven further games in the series had been released in both Japan and the US. All but *Tales of Legendia* (the sixth sequel game) were composed by Sakuraba and Shinji Tamura with several other composers helping out with some of the games. The bombastic nature of the battle tracks in this series has continued ever since.

Suikoden (*Gensō Suikoden* for its original Japanese release) was released on Sony’s *PlayStation* console. Its narrative is one that falls into the “Hero’s Journey” once again with its plot inspired by the classical Chinese novel *Shui Hu Zhuan* due to various similarities. The game’s setting for example, is one principally inspired by China and the hero can recruit 108 people to their cause – inspired by the 108 outlaws in the aforementioned novel – and there is conflict against the ruling military. A larger-than-normal team was assembled to write and arrange the music, consisting of Miki Higashino, Tappy Iwase, Hiroshi Tamawari, Hirofumi Taniguchi and Mayuko Kageshita. Once again, the soundtrack is an eclectic mix of styles from early Western Classical orchestral music reminiscent of Haydn (“Royal Palace Consultation”), the traditional Chinese musical influence of “Eternal Flow” with its erhu-like timbre, the French folk-influence with mandolin and accordion of “This Sweetie is the Town Treasure” and “Narcy’s Theme” and the Irish influences of “An Old Irish Song”. All of these are significantly longer than average cues for this point in CRPG history with many within the soundtrack over two minutes in length – in no small part to the *PlayStation*’s larger-capacity CD-ROM game medium. This meant that *Suikoden* could use streamed-audio resulting in timbral qualities subjectively superior to that of CRPGs on the SNES.

Unusually, *Suikoden* cues include several that are to do with feelings and emotions rather than being used to accompany the area at hand. Examples include cues to represent tension, sadness, despair and thoughtfulness with multiple arrangements of these cues. Whilst these are not character themes per se, I would argue that these are far closer towards these and how characters might be feeling than the other categories that Chatman lists. This is likely due to the 108 characters found within the game and creating

character themes for all of them would be impractical. Following this reasoning, we can suggest that *Suikoden* is another JRPG example that obeys all of the components of Chatman's narrative theory.

With games like *Lunar: Eternal Blue* and *Suikoden* being developed for CD-ROM, the transition towards optical storage and away from cartridges was inevitable⁶² and indeed for home computer gaming, this had already been the case for some time. Whilst read times from disc were slower than accessing information on cartridge, the fact they could store vastly more data than the other medium of the time meant that developers started to experiment with – amongst other things – cutscenes that interspersed the gameplay in an effort to advance the narrative. These cutscenes were short video clips with most being voice acted in addition to having music accompanying them. With the cutscenes being linear by design, the music used to accompany them would have to be as well which was often in contrast to the loops of other pieces. David 'Ryatta' Wyatt of inMotion Gaming states, 'You can group cutscenes into three categories; Live Action, Pre-Rendered and Real Time' (Wyatt, 2012). Whilst real-time cutscenes had been around since the 1981 arcade game *Donkey Kong* (Guinness World Record, 2008), these were done in-game and did not use much data; in stark contrast to the pre-rendered and live action cutscenes included in 1990s games.⁶³

For Western developers, this way of advancing the plot was often via live-action cutscenes; quite simply recorded film. Often low-budget in quality (Wyatt, 2012), Western RPGs were not immune to this injection of cutscene, for instance in the 1995 game *Stonekeep* (with music composed by Brian Luzietti and Richard Band) and 1997s *Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny* (with music composed by David Arkenstone and Frank Klepacki) as shown below in Fig. 2.31.



Fig. 2.31 – A still image from a live action cutscene from the 1997 WRPG *Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny*.

⁶² As of 2020, the *Nintendo Switch*, has reverted to the use of cartridges as their medium. For more information, the website SVG has a comprehensive analysis of why this design choice was made: <https://www.svg.com/137368/the-real-reason-nintendo-ditched-discs-for-the-switch/> [Accessed Aug 2020].

⁶³ For further information on music and cut-scenes, Giles Hooper's 2018 chapter should be explored.

Conversely, JRPGs tended to feature more anime-style cutscenes (see Fig. 2.32), drawing inspiration from another culturally important form of Japanese media – further information on which will be discussed in Chapter Four. Several JRPGs were famous for doing this, notably the *Cosmic Fantasy* series – beginning with *Cosmic Fantasy: Bōken Shōnen Yū* (Hisao Inoue, Jun Hasebe and Tenpei Sato providing the score) in 1990. Interestingly, the only one out of this series of six games to be released outside of Japan was *Cosmic Fantasy 2*, released with an English dub in the US in 1992. Additionally, (as stated above) the *Tales* series should also be mentioned with its direct links to anime.



Fig. 2.32 - A still image from an anime-style pre-rendered cutscene from the JRPG *Cosmic Fantasy 4*.

As we reach the end of the Golden Age part II, certain characteristics are showcasing themselves across CRPGs. In JRPGs, a consistent style is arguably no longer important, just as narratively, one core idea of a quasi-medieval medieval fantasy was no longer the default narrative genre. Instead, musical inspiration and styles are pulled from many different regions, just as ‘J-Pop tends to renew itself through the incorporation of new styles... such as J-rock, J-rap, J-reggae, that may renew and strengthen J-pop’ (Monty, 2010, p. 123). The impact of anime – through cutscenes and the styles of music that Japanese animation included would also become important. JRPGs in particular, had a musical score that met Chatman’s components of a narrative with cues representing actions, settings, characters and happenings. The two halves of Barton’s Golden Age are undoubtedly the period of history that separated Japanese role-playing games from their Western counterparts in almost all game elements. For music however, this was ultimately affected by the differences in narrative, ludic design choices and the vast array of culturally diverse styles that were being incorporated in JRPGs.

2.4.7 The Platinum Age: 1996 – 2000

Barton's Platinum Age saw the re-emergence of Western studios developing noteworthy CRPGs in addition to the continued high-quality release of Japanese based role-playing games mainly dominated by companies such as Square and Enix.

The best-selling (Swatman, 2016) and arguably most recognisable CRPG of all time – *Pokémon* (released in two versions: *Pokémon Red* and *Green*^{64 65}) – was made available in Japan for Nintendo's *Game Boy* platform on February 27, 1996. The narrative of *Pokémon* relates again to Campbell's "Hero's Journey" and it is set in a fantastical world which is loosely based on Japan, populated by creatures known as Pokémon. The player plays as a trainer of these Pokémon, capturing them and battling with them against other trainers and villains. Over time, these creatures can evolve into newer and more powerful Pokémon in addition to learning a variety of moves to use within battle ultimately leading the player to fight the 'Elite Four' before becoming Pokémon Champion. Whilst the setting is synonymous with Japan, Roger Moseley and Aya Saiki write; '[t]he worldwide success of a game franchise such as Pokémon indicates how digital games can be rooted in a specific cultural context and yet migrate freely across borders' (Moseley/Saiki, 2014, p. 53). The game's solo composer for the first two generations of games⁶⁶ and co-composer for the other main-series games is Junichi Masuda. The *Game Boy*'s sound chip allowed for two quadrangular channels, one wave channel, one pseudo-random noise channel and one external sound channel (8bitcollective, 2007), but meant that it was distinctly less capable than the audio chip of the SNES or its contemporaries. As such, a regression in timbre and part-writing is to be expected. Masuda states his greatest musical influences to be 20th Century Western Classical composers; Stravinsky, Shostakovich and Holst, although he cites his favourite genre as techno and suggests that his music may well contain elements of these composers and genres (Grimm, 2009). *Pokémon*'s more modern and arguably mundane setting than in many previous JRPGs which focused on distant or historical worlds, meant that even whilst the timbral choices and textural writing were reminiscent of the NES, the nature of the JRPG musical score by this point allowed for *Pokémon* to continue in this vein, rather than the medievalism of these older CRPGs.

Continuing with JRPGs, publisher and developer Atlus released *Megami Ibunroku Persona* (*Revelations: Persona* in the US) on September 20, 1996 for the *PlayStation*. Once again, a "Hero's Journey" narrative, the plot is based around a group of Japanese high school students as they are confronted with a succession of

⁶⁴ The special edition *Pokémon Blue* – which had updated visuals amongst a number of other minor improvements – was released on October 15, 1996 as a mail-order-only special edition from *CoroCoro Comic*. This version would become the base template for the international version of *Pokémon Red/Green* which would be renamed to *Pokémon Red/Blue*.

⁶⁵ Another special edition version of this game would be titled *Pokémon Yellow* – after the colour of the infamous Pokémon Pikachu which linked to the story of the anime. Only minor changes occur between this version and the base *Pokémon Red/Blue*, but it is included in the count of the first-generation Pokémon games helping add to the number of sales this particular CRPG has.

⁶⁶ It is easier to call the *Pokémon games* 'generations' due to them being released in pairs (for example Gold & Silver, Ruby & Sapphire) to encourage trading between different versions of the same game.

supernatural incidents. After gaining the ability to summon Personas – an aspect of their personality that can be brought out for combat – the group must track down and confront the source of the supernatural incidents that are threatening their city. Whilst the player plays as a silent protagonist, the supporting characters are all named and have their own backstories and motivations resulting in a game about uncovering psychological traits as much as the fantasy of dealing with the supernatural. Four people wrote the music for *Megami Ibunroku Persona* – Hidehito Aoki, Kenichi Tsuchiya, Misaki Okibe and Shoji Meguro – a much different way of scoring games compared to a company like Square who had a policy of one composer per title at the time (Napolitano, 2012). Somewhat surprisingly – given how eclectic the mix of styles in other JRPGs at this point, the fact that it maintains a reasonable degree of homogeneity throughout the score is particularly notable though that is arguably mainly down to its timbre. *Megami Ibunroku Persona* mainly uses electronic-synth based sounds and prominent drum beats with ostinato features found either on a guitar or synth. Stylistically the tracks mainly range from horror-inspired ambient tracks through electro dance-style to rock and metal-based instrumental pieces. Like with many other JRPGs at this point, *Megami Ibunroku Persona*'s composition team uses character themes across the score to accompany the multitude of characters as the plot demands. Take for example “Eriko’s Theme” (“Elly’s Theme” in the US). The motif itself is not particularly memorable until later in the track but its prominent bass and driving drum beat maintain a constant feeling of energy.

In general, *Megami Ibunroku Persona* was an anomaly for its time both in narrative structure and score. IGN at the time reviewed the game and stated, ‘this philosophical game departs from traditional swords and sorcery to deliver a tale of dreams, the purpose of life, and who we are as individuals... [here] you have an RPG masterpiece’ (IGN Staff, 1997). This is a game which – along with *Pokémon* – is an entirely different portrayal of fantasy than the quasi-medieval fantasies that the eight-melody model relates to. Consequently, it is another reinforcement that for JRPGs the eight-melody model is no longer appropriate.

On the same day that *Revelations: Persona* was released in Japan, Bethesda Softworks released *The Elder Scrolls II: Daggerfall* (henceforth known as *Daggerfall*) in the United States – the sequel to their 1994 game *The Elder Scrolls: Arena*. Whilst *Arena* had a loyal but small fan-base, *Daggerfall*'s profile quickly surpassed its predecessor – in no small part due to winning several “Game of the Year Awards” (*PC Gamer US*, *Computer Gaming World* and a finalist for the *Codie Awards*). For *PC Gamer US*, Michael Wolf stated, ‘about as close to reality (or is that fantasy?) as you can get in a computer game... [it’s] one of the most realistic, involved, and impressive RPGs on the market’ (Wolf, 1996). Set in a high fantasy world, the *Daggerfall* drew inspiration from many Western works of fantasy fiction, not least *Lord of the Rings* and the *Dungeons and Dragons* franchise in addition to other games such as the *Ultima* series and *Legends of Valour* (Peterson, 2001). Its narrative is one of the “Hero’s Journey” however, that is only if a player wishes to complete the game. It is

argued on several forums⁶⁷ that people play the games more for the experience and character creation rather than solely for the story and ‘completing the game’. This is due to the entire series, not just *Arena* and *Daggerfall* being described as sandboxes – large areas for the player to play in how they want rather than necessarily having to follow a story. This is important feature and will be explored further in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

For both *Daggerfall* and its prequel, Eric Heberling scored the music. Very much Western in its instrumentation, Heberling scores for orchestra and choir with only a few instances where he chooses to more synth-based instruments. Structurally, much of the music falls into marked four or eight bar phrases and most tracks have clearly definable melodies. In this respect, the music is not all that dissimilar to many of the JRPGs listed above and for all it has been possible to separate the two CRPG-genres so far in terms of timbre and musical style, there are indeed elements such as harmonic rhythm of one or two chords per bar and melodies formed in two, four or eight-bar phrases that are comparable across the CRPG divide. Whilst this would change – and further examples are shown below – to say that the two sub-genres of CRPG have *completely* different music at this point in their history would be objectively false. *Daggerfall* used MIDI tracks rather than pre-recorded or sampled music and this should be noted for the fact that players’ experience of the score would be different depending upon their machine’s sound-card. On Heberling’s official website, a free, specially-arranged suite for orchestra of several notable themes from *Daggerfall* has been made available to download as a PDF.⁶⁸

Below in Fig. 2.33 ([audio track 2.17](#)) is the score for ‘Sunny Day’ – the MIDI file from the game imported into Sibelius Ultimate 2018.11 before being tidied. It was chosen due to its similarities to Mitsuda’s ‘Morning Sunlight’ from *Chrono Trigger* (shown above). Like that cue, it is relatively short and is used for a very similar narrative purpose. Like Mitsuda, Heberling uses very similar orchestral instrumentation and whilst there is the obvious contrast of a 3/4 rhythm used by Heberling compared to the 4/4 by Mitsuda, the only real difference is in the harmony; Mitsuda’s harmonic language is much more varied even if (like Heberling) the harmonic rhythm is only one chord per bar. Conversely, Heberling sticks to triads for the whole piece, using a I – flat III, or I – flat VI to create the fantastical sound. There are several similarities however, aside from the instrumentation. Both cues use a clear woodwind melody that sits at the top of the musical texture – in the case of ‘Morning Sunlight’, this is in octaves, whereas in ‘Sunny Day’, both the flute and clarinet are doubled. Mitsuda uses strings to thicken the musical texture and Heberling uses choir. Forward-momentum and as a

⁶⁷ ESCAPIST PORTAL. (2012). Why Do People Like Elder Scrolls Games? *Escapist.com*, [online]. Available at: <https://www.escapistmagazine.com/forums/read/9.385610-Why-do-people-like-Elder-Scrolls-games?page=2> [Accessed May 2019].

REDDIT. (2018). You Should All Play Daggerfall: It’s the Best. *Reddit.com*, [online]. Available at: https://www.reddit.com/r/ElderScrolls/comments/711tvi/you_should_all_play_daggerfall_its_the_best/ [Accessed May 2019].

⁶⁸ HEBERLING, E. (1995). *Daggerfall Suite*. *Heberling Music*, [online]. Available at: <http://www.heberlingmusic.com/images/Manuscripts/DaggerfallSuite.pdf> [Accessed May 2019].

consequence, a clearly discernible pulse is created through broken chords – ‘Morning Sunlight’ through the harp, whereas, in ‘Sunny Day’, it is found in the staccato violins. The bassline heard in both pieces in the lower strings are generally just whole-bar notes, played at a very similar pitch range.⁶⁹

What this brief-comparison shows us is that as of the mid-1990s, there were many similarities between music composed for CRPGs across the JRPG/WRPG divide. The ambience model of Soule’s *Secret of Evermore* had yet to gain a huge amount of traction and music still had a clearly identifiable pulse. Where this would change however, is in the dark-fantasy WRPG – *Diablo*.

The musical score for 'A Sunny Morning' is written for a 3/4 time signature with a tempo of 120. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Flute, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, Harp, Choir, Violins, and Contrabass. The woodwinds and strings play a melodic line with broken chords, while the harp provides a rhythmic pulse. The choir provides harmonic support. The second system starts at measure 9 and includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, Harp, Choir, Violins, and Contrabass. The woodwinds and strings continue the melodic line, while the harp provides a rhythmic pulse. The choir provides harmonic support.

⁶⁹ As is standard, the contrabass in ‘A Sunny Morning’ is written an octave above its sounding pitch.

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Sunny Day' from *The Elder Scrolls II: Daggerfall* by Eric Heberling. The score is presented in three systems, each containing staves for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Horn (Hn.), Harp (Hp.), Violins (Vlns.), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Cb.).

System 1 (Measures 17-24): The Flute and Clarinet parts feature a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Horn part has a sustained chord. The Harp part includes glissando markings. The Violins, Viola, and Cello parts are marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and feature sustained chords.

System 2 (Measures 25-32): The Flute and Clarinet parts continue their melodic lines. The Horn part has a sustained chord. The Harp part is mostly silent. The Violins, Viola, and Cello parts feature a triplet of eighth notes in the Viola part.

System 3 (Measures 29-36): The Flute and Clarinet parts continue their melodic lines. The Horn part has a sustained chord. The Violins, Viola, and Cello parts feature a sustained chord.

Fig. 2.33 - MIDI Import into Sibelius of 'Sunny Day' from *The Elder Scrolls II: Daggerfall* by Eric Heberling

The Action-RPG/rogue-like⁷⁰ game *Diablo* was released on December 31, 1996 by Blizzard Entertainment for *Windows*. This WRPG would become synonymous with a dark-fantasy/horror narrative structure and the ludic genre that although is a CRPG, features gameplay elements that favour gear collection and combat over plot. As the game's name suggests, *Diablo* sees the player character attempting to defeat Diablo – the Lord of Terror – from destroying the Kingdom of Khanduras and ultimately descending into Hell to do so. Matt Uelmen composed the music for the game – a soundtrack that consisted of just six tracks and contained only 25 minutes of unique audio. The score as a whole can best be described as ambient in nature with very few instrumental lines in any of the six cues being able to be described as melodic and instead motivic-fragments fade in and out. Whilst the cue 'Town'⁷¹ is the most melodic of *Diablo*'s six cues, the rest of the score is designed to feel oppressive and constantly unsettling. Uelmen states in an interview that:

[T]he town part of the original Diablo and the action material really come from two different universes; the town more from the Peruvian waltzes, older US country sounds and the folkier side of the early 70s acoustic sound immortalized by Page, Buckingham, and the Geffen acts. The dungeon stuff was a little more influenced by 80s sounds like Bauhaus, where that noisy post-punk sound experimented with the kind of things dub reggae was doing around that period (Uelmen, 2019).

In an earlier interview, he suggests that the "Town" theme was also inspired by Led Zeppelin III and the 'medieval vibe' of folk-rock of the 1970s (Uelmen, 2017) which to him was the kind of aesthetic that *Dungeons and Dragons* and games of that ilk warranted (Uelmen, 2009). From these statements, it is understandable to learn that *Diablo*'s score has an unusual choice of timbres within it compared to other fantasy CRPGs of the time; combining rock elements of synthesiser, guitar and percussion with the more traditional orchestral palate. This is something similar to what JRPGs had been doing – incorporating material from other styles of music. What is different however, is rather than Uelmen having a series of cues which were stylistically different from one another, so that the game as a whole has a variety of musical styles that it draws upon, all of *Diablo*'s six cues incorporated an amalgamation of orchestral timbres, rock timbres, synthesised timbres with ambient, motivic, fragmental writing to create a coherent whole. No cue feels surprising or out of place, because every cue is the same yet different (which I define as different in terms of the melodic material with an eclectic mix of musical elements). Yet, timbrally and stylistically they all share the oppressive and unsettling feeling that Uelmen set out to achieve. Along with Soule's *Secret of Evermore*, this would change WRPG musical score design and further widen the JRPG/WRPG divide, even if both forms of the CRPG were drawing on additional forms of musical inspiration.

⁷⁰ A rogue-like CRPG is a particular ludic-specific form that is generally characterised through playing through procedurally generated dungeon levels with a focus on bettering equipment and stats over narrative. It is named after the 1980 game *Rogue: Exploring the Dungeons of Doom*.

⁷¹ This is often known as "Tristram's Theme" due to the town being called "Tristram".

Final Fantasy VII was released in Japan on January 31, 1997 and became the second-best selling game on the *PlayStation*, has continued to be the best-selling game of the *Final Fantasy* series (Madsen, 2016), and was the second best-selling RPG ever up until that point with almost 10 million copies sold. Blending fantasy with sci-fi – arguably to more of an extent than ever before – *Final Fantasy VII* moved from Nintendo platforms to Sony’s *PlayStation* console due to the CD-ROM storage capacity. It brought the worldwide release numbers together, with every version of the game being marketed with the Roman numeral VII even though only three previous *Final Fantasy* games had been released there. Aside from ‘One-Winged Angel’ – which has been analysed by myself elsewhere⁷² and is somewhat of a hybrid piece due to the incorporation of a recorded four-part choir – every other track would be MIDI based; a notable difference compared to other CRPGs of the time that had moved onto using sampled instruments or streaming audio for some years by this point. This meant that timbrally, *Final Fantasy VII* is comparable to JRPGs on the SNES compared to its contemporaries on the *PlayStation*.

Once more, Nobuo Uematsu scored the game in which most of the timbral sounds were created using a Roland SC88 synthesizer (Greening, 2011). Its total amount of music spanned four CDs when the soundtrack was released separately with Uematsu suggesting that *Final Fantasy VII* his ‘greatest harvest’ (Uematsu, 1997). Continuing his use of leitmotifs first started in *Final Fantasy VI*, multiple tracks from this game alone have been played outside of the game on arranged soundtracks and in concert halls – Chapter Four and Six explain more.

Outside of ‘One-Winged Angel’, one of the more popular character themes within the game is ‘Aerith’s Theme’ – the leitmotif for a flower-selling girl who the player could control for a short-while and would go onto play a major part in the game’s narrative structure. This piece managed to rise into the top five on the UK’s 2013 “Classic FM Hall of Fame” (Ross, 2015, p. 12) and introduced many listeners who were non-gamers to video game music for the first time. **See Appendix 2.9** ([audio track 2.18](#)). Whilst this is a clear evolution over Uematsu’s earlier ‘Theme of Love’ from *Final Fantasy IV*, the use of stylistic clichés mentioned above such as choices of instrumentation (flute, harp, strings), in addition to a lyrical, whimsical melody supported by chordal accompaniment still stands. There are slight changes to Uematsu’s harmonic-language however; similar to Mitsuda’s use of extended and add-chords, Uematsu employs the same – particularly with the infamous D^{add2} chord heard right at the beginning. Notice too, Uematsu’s hesitance at using the major dominant chord. Throughout much of the piece, both the minor dominant and subdominant chords are employed giving the cue a distinctly bittersweet edge. Sweeney’s theory of aesthetics comes into play here; perhaps more so than in almost any other JRPG to date. To begin with, Aerith is first portrayed as merely an innocent flower girl. Yet, the music does not completely match this through its movement to the relative minor (B minor) for a substantial portion of the overall cue, coupled together with the multiple moments of

⁷² The score for ‘One-Winged Angel’ has been included as **Appendix 2.10** ([audio track 2.19](#)) which showcases the recorded choir and MIDI-based instrumental track.

haunting monophony. Thus, she is given meaning through the music. We – the player – know her as a flower girl at the start of the game, and the whimsical D^{add2} chord suggests just that. Yet as the story progresses, her character is expanded to a role beyond what we could possibly realise at the start of the game; destined to be alone (the monophony), dying and causing Cloud heartbreak (the transition to Bm with multiple references to F#m) and yet being instrumental in saving the planet with the tutti sections. Unlike Feena from *Ys* or Terra from *Final Fantasy VI*, Aerith has complete knowledge of who she is throughout her character arc and only reveals more as she comes to trust her companions. For this reason, Uematsu's character theme allows players to take meaning from the aesthetics of the music itself.

As with 'Terra's Theme' from *Final Fantasy VI*, 'Aerith's Theme' is a leitmotif; changing as necessary depending on the circumstances in which the character of Aerith is shown. First heard in the cue 'Flowers Blooming in the Church' after Cloud crashes through the roof, it is heard again in its previously mentioned main form, as well as 'World Crisis', the cue that accompanies the climactic moment of the game, changing in both rhythm and pitch, as well as the accompanying timbres and in style.

So successful has *Final Fantasy VII* been – and indeed the soundtrack too – that in April 2020, *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* was released; first *Final Fantasy* game to get a full remake⁷³ – as compared to a remaster for example *Final Fantasy X/X-2* and more on this remake is discussed in Chapter Three at the end of this history. It is undoubtedly a fan-favourite within the wider series of *Final Fantasy* games and the mere announcement of a remake resulted in Square Enix's share-value rising by 2.9% (Leary, 2015). Ultimately, I argue that *Final Fantasy VII's* music does not stand out in CRPG music history as being something new; Uematsu had already been composing music in a similar style, similar timbres and similar cue placements for a number of *Final Fantasy* games for some time at this point.⁷⁴ Huron's theory of expectation suggests that Uematsu did not have much of a choice here – an expectation from what had come before both in his own writing and that of his contemporaries in video games and beyond had cemented this musical language. Instead, Uematsu's score for the game can be regarded as notable for two reasons. Firstly, Uematsu's score for *Final Fantasy VII* is a refinement of everything that he had created so far – and with the state-of-the-art CGI FMVs and its corresponding filmic-inspired cues⁷⁵, in addition to the piece 'One-Winged Angel's' hybrid nature, this was a look to the future for the series. Secondly, this was the game that truly broke the *Final Fantasy* series into the US video games market and 'introduced a generation to the Japanese RPG as a genre' (Low 2001, Kamen 2020) and for that reason would likely resonate with international players and composers as much as to a domestic Japanese audience.

⁷³ There has been some debate as to whether the term 'remake' is appropriate, given the vast changes made to the new version as compared to the original. As I suggested elsewhere, the term 're-imagining' might be more appropriate.

⁷⁴ In addition to a number of non-JRPG games that he had written for.

⁷⁵ The filmic nature of the musical accompaniment for FMVs is discussed in section 4.2.2.

On December 21, 1998 Interplay Entertainment released *Baldur's Gate* – a CRPG created by the Canadian development team BioWare and one that would play an influential role in the development of future CRPGs made in the West – so much so that I would argue that *Baldur's Gate* can be seen to be the start of the modern WRPg. The narrative structure was one of high fantasy; set in the “Forgotten Realms” – a campaign setting for *Dungeons & Dragons* – and has since been credited for reviving the PC-based CRPG (Rausch, 2004). Like with many WRPgs, the player takes on the role of the orphaned ward of the mage Gorion; what the ward's name, gender, skillset or attributes are however, are up to the player. BioWare designed the game so that to a certain degree the story would be influenced by the player's actions rather than the player partaking in a pre-written story. As such, it is entirely possible for players to not experience certain areas or characters in the game depending on the choices that they make earlier on.

For the soundtrack, BioWare turned to the German composer Michael Hoenig; a composer who had made his name in the ‘innovative, electronic underground scene of the seventies’ (Berling, 2018). As a one-time member of the German electronic band *Tangerine Dream*, Hoenig had plenty of experience with synthesizers and the transition from writing film scores to video game soundtracks was not particularly troublesome. Various commentators have described Hoenig's music as ‘atmospheric’ (Alratan, 2010) but few reviews have been done on the score for this hugely influential game. Hoenig – like Heberling before him – scores for a typical Hollywood fantasy film orchestra, requiring wind, brass, percussion and strings with synthesised voices from time to time. He was heavily inspired – with various commentators citing plagiarism⁷⁶ – by Western film scores in this style, with his cue “Attacked by Assassins” having distinct similarities to “Theme from Lifeforce” from the film *Lifeforce* (dir. Hooper, 1985) by Henry Mancini. A transcription of the ambient track “Stealth in the Bandit Camp” is shown below in Fig. 2.34 ([audio track 2.20](#)). For this, Hoenig realises the “creeping” nature with a pizzicato walking bass whilst melodic fragments enter. An inverted dominant pedal is the only real continuity in the piece aside from the walking bass. The tonality is predominantly A minor (although arguably more around the Aeolian mode due to the continuous use of G-naturals), albeit hints at modulations occur such as at bar ten to E minor and bar fourteen to D minor, even though the walking bass does not always provide harmonic continuity. Instead, quite a sparse sound is created, mainly through the use of open fourths and fifths; often between the two horn parts or between the bassoons. Metre changes also reduce the recognition of the listener to hear a noticeable time signature and because of the lack of a distinctive melody, the track has much more of an ambient feel. This ambience has clearly been shown before in *Secrets of Evermore*, or *Diablo*, yet in both of those games, neither truly tally with the hero's journey structure and medieval fantasy setting established in a large majority of WRPgs until this point. As such, Hoenig's musical score, employing a standard Western orchestral timbre focuses upon fragmentary motifs,

⁷⁶ KolonKu. (2018). Was Michael Hoenig a fraud? *Beamdog Forums*, [online]. Available at: <https://forums.beamdog.com/discussion/69674/was-michael-hoenig-a-fraud> [Accessed May 2019].

an attention on dynamic swells and various metre changes to disguise any definite sense of metre, which is brought together to create an ambience.

$\text{♩} = 50$

Flute

Bassoon

Horn in F

Timpani

Bass Drum

Strings

Contrabass

mf

mf

ppp < > *ppp*

pp < *p*

p < *mp*

pp < *p* pizz

f

ppp



7 *poco rit.* $\text{♩} = 50$

Fl.

Ob.

Bsn.

Hn.

Timp.

Str.

Cb.

p-mp

p-mp

p-mp

p-mp

pp

ppp < *p*

mf

mp

mp

14

Fl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Str.

Cb.

17

Fl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Str.

Cb.

ppp

ppp

ppp

ppp

Fig. 2.34 - Transcription of “Stealth in the Bandit Camp” from *Baldur’s Gate* by Michael Hoenig

Baldur’s Gate’s musical score is another hugely important milestone in this canon of CRPGs. Just as I have argued previously that Japanese titles such as *Ys*, *Phantasy Star* and *Final Fantasy V* really set the foundation for the JRPG style in Barton’s Golden Age, titles such as *Diablo* and *Baldur’s Gate* are the foundational scores for WRPGs and something that would be built upon by composers of future titles. The logicity behinds the game’s narrative, means that there is a homogenous stylistic and timbral choices to the game’s musical cues. *Baldur’s Gate* obeys and expands upon the eight-melody template laid down by *Ultima III* and *Dragon Quest*, with the inclusion of such cues as taverns and temples which is in stark contrast to the JRPGs at the time.

To reinforce this last point, the sequel to *Chrono Trigger* – named *Chrono Cross* – was released in Japan on November 18, 1999 and its plot dealt with a theme of parallel worlds rather than time-travel as found in the first game. Multiple game-review websites critically acclaimed the game including a perfect 10.0 from the website *Gamespot* and to date only sixteen games have received a perfect score on the website since its creation in 1996. Whilst the main two characters in the game – Serge, a seventeen-year-old boy from a fishing

village and Kid, a feisty thief – are significantly developed over the course of the game, there are 45 party members in total. The narrative is once more a “Hero’s Journey” story. For *Chrono Cross*, Yasunori Mitsuda was once again brought in to write the score after being commissioned personally by the director Masato Kato in order to build upon the work that he had done for *Chrono Trigger* and the 1996 text-based side-story *Radical Dreamers* in order to give the game a ‘Chrono Sound’ (Kato, 1999). He goes on to state:

The setting was made to be somewhere around the southern islands, so my first thoughts were, I wanted “something with a Southeast Asian feel, mixed with the foreign tastes and the tones of countries such as Greece”.

A fusion of different styles, not only fictional but also real-world inspirations are used across the various elements of the game as a whole. For the music, Mitsuda echoes Kato:

I tried to apply a Mediterranean sound to all of this music, experimenting with Fado guitar type sounds. I have a strong sense of Fado style as being represented by deeply expressive lyrics and minor-key music. But for a challenge, I tried to make my overall theme as writing music that could penetrate to the depths of one's heart with a bright, major-key sound. In addition, as I've recently been studying African percussion, I made use of the rhythms of Africa, and the sounds of the ancient music of various lands like Finland, China, Mongolia and Greece. Of course, my Irish sound is also doing well... I'm able to achieve a well-organized form out of seemingly disparate sounds (Mitsuda, 2005).

Mitsuda also states a visual inspiration for the music in the game; ‘All of my subjects are taken from scenery. I love artwork’ (Mitsuda, 2000). With the game’s theme being parallel worlds – titled in game as “Home” and “Another” – Mitsuda aimed to give a musical meaning to the different versions of each town and city. Generally, each “Home” version in the game has a brighter more energetic style to it, with the “Another” version being more melancholic.⁷⁷ Coherency is thus achieved through a sense of intensity in the music for this game – stylistic homogeny was clearly avoided by the design team as a whole in an attempt to incorporate the feeling of multiple real-world cultures.

To show more of this blurring of styles, below in Fig. 2.35 ([audio track 2.21](#)) is a transcription of the track “Fields of Time – Home World”. Within the track, there is a constant Latin-American percussion giving a beat with an acoustic bass playing the same rhythmical pattern throughout. The syncopated acoustic guitar could be argued to have a Fado guitar style being that it is in mainly F# major (an Ionian mode Fado is stereotypically in) and then there is the sitar. Indian in origin, its sympathetic strings give a shimmering sound which is heard continuously in this track. A blurring of styles is indeed present here and relates to Mitsuda’s comments of

⁷⁷ The only real exception to this is the track “Termina” with the “Home” version being the more laid back of the two (Kotowski, 2005).

wishing to achieve a coherent form out of disparate sounds. This further supports the argument that in order to create coherence in JRPG musical scores, then composers were actively writing a non-homogenous score in terms of style and timbral choice even whilst adhering to the JRPG tradition of clear melodies as can be seen:

$\text{♩} = 100$

Acoustic Guitar *mf*

Acoustic Bass *mf*

Egg Shaker *mf* *Rhythm carries on the same throughout*

Claves *mf* *Rhythm carries on the same throughout*

Wood Block *mf* *Rhythm carries on the same throughout*

Congas *mf* *Rhythm carries on the same throughout*

5

Sit. *f*

A. Gtr.

A. Bass

9

Sit.

A. Gtr.

A. Bass

13

Sit. 1.

A. Gtr.

A. Bass

17

Sit.

A. Gtr.

A. Bass

21

Sit.

A. Gtr.

A. Bass

25

Sit.

A. Gtr.

A. Bass

29

Sit.

A. Gtr.

A. Bass

32

Sit.

A. Gtr.

A. Bass

D.C.

Fig. 2.35 – Transcription of “Fields of Time – Home” from *Chrono Cross* by Yasunori Mitsuda.

On December 12, 1999, the American development studio Black Isle Studios released their next *Dungeons & Dragons* CRPG – *Planescape: Torment*. Set in a number of locations across the multiverse of “Planescape” (a *D&D* setting), the story follows “The Nameless One” – an immortal being who loses his memories each time he is killed. Throughout the game, the Nameless One’s journey takes him through the city of Sigil amongst other locales, gaining companions as he attempts to recover his memories of his past lives. The game deviates from other *D&D* settings however, due to the deliberate exclusion of stereotypically established fantasy traits; there are no elves or dwarves for instance. The setting is centred around the aforementioned absurdist city of Sigil as shown in Fig. 2.36; ‘a more adult, hard-core fantasy setting compared to other TSR [the production company of *D&D*] worlds’ (Last Rites Team, 2007). This was a game very much unlike other WRPGs as it sought to differentiate itself and indeed the game’s end-credits dedicate inspiration from two JRPGs - *Final Fantasy VII* and *VIII* - during the “Thanks to” section.

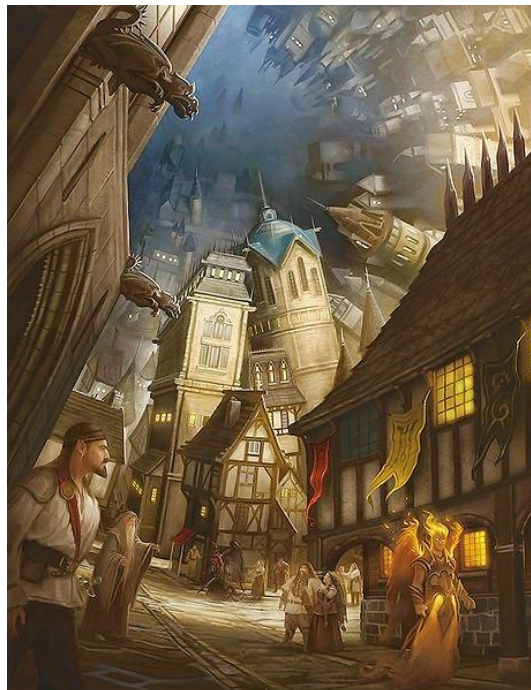


Fig. 2.36 – An artistic impression of the absurdist city of “Sigil” – the main locale from the WRPG *Planescape: Torment*.

The game’s score was originally composed by the Welsh dark-ambient musician Lustmord (Brian Williams), however, due to a change in producer, the stylistic direction was changed just six weeks before the game was due to be released (Williams, 2001) and the composer Mark Morgan was brought on board with additional music by Richard Band and “Pull”. According to Morgan, ‘although *Planescape: Torment* had some orchestral elements, it still came from an ambient place in order to tell the story’ (Morgan, 2014). Even so, the ambience and prominent synthesized timbral qualities to the score make for a soundtrack much more in common with science-fiction games and films rather than fantasy. Percussion underpins almost the entire score, often panned so that it crosses the stereo spectrum making for a constantly unsettled feel. As Hoenig

did for *Baldur's Gate*, a choir is often used to give a spiritual quality to the score; a timbral feature by this point used almost universally in fantasy and fantasy-inspired CRPGs.⁷⁸ "Morte's Theme" – used to represent a floating skull – for instance, is a notable track within the score as a whole for its absurdist quality; comical in nature, it employs a wordless male voice sample sounding at times like burping in addition to panpipe, strings – both arco and pizzicato, electric bass guitar, horns, and numerous other synthesized samples. Numerous other ethnically-diverse manipulated samples including pipes and strings permeate the rest of the score leaving *Planescape: Torment's* score as diverse, absurd and unique as the game it is accompanying. As unusual, is the large number of character themes (including "Morte's Theme") that were employed; a feature found far less in WRPGs than Japanese ones as this history shows so far. This is almost certainly unlike any other score in this study of fantasy CRPG scores. There are perhaps several reasons for this. Firstly, the player's avatar – the Nameless One – is not the stereotypical protagonist found in most other CRPGs. The player takes control of a character who has lived through multiple incarnations both good and evil whose personality is for the most part reset after each death. As a consequence, he is an egomaniacal, selfish immortal who at one point in his past committed a heinous sin. With this deviance away from the standard do-gooder and someone who is trying to regain their memories,⁷⁹ he is a character that is existing in a world that is different from what had come before. Secondly, the setting of Sigil is a domain like no others in the *Dungeons & Dragons* universe; it is suggested to be at the centre of the universe where portals exist to connect to every other world and plane-of-existence. For that reason, a timbre associated with a medieval fantasy world would not suit a setting which is meant to connect to everywhere. Instead, the music would be more appropriate if it purposely avoided any direct reference to a familiar style and timbre. Consequently, this can be considered an anomaly in the history of fantasy WRPGs.

The following year, Black Isle Studios released another "Forgotten Realms" *Dungeons & Dragons* CRPG; *Icewind Dale*. Released on June 29, 2000 it was based on the same game engine as *Baldur's Gate* but differed in several ways some of which affected its narrative aspects. Whilst the game involves a fantastical setting with a plot featuring a battle against a demon, the "Hero's Journey" narrative theory does not quite fit as well as in *Baldur's Gate* due to the fact that rather than the player taking control of one character, the player creates a team of six at the beginning of the game. For the most part however, the game is more focused on combat and levelling up the player's party. Jeremy Soule – by this point having established his own music production company along with his brother⁸⁰ – was tasked with scoring the music for the game; the first large project that his fledgling company worked upon. Soule's work for the game builds upon the orchestral and choir palate that Hoenig created for *Baldur's Gate*.

⁷⁸ This feature will be amongst many highlighted in the new models of CRPG musical score design that I propose and will be discussed further in chapters three and four.

⁷⁹ This trope is not unique; the WRPG developer *Bioware* used it for their 2003 game *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* with the character Revan.

⁸⁰ Originally titled *Soule Media*, it has since been renamed to *Artistry Entertainment*.

Commentators on Soule's score described it as the score that 'marked and solidified Soule's standard orchestral style' (Gann, 2008). Indeed, Soule won the "Best Music of the Year" award from both *IGN* and *GameSpot* in 2000 with *IGN* stating:

In an area where the industry is showing rapid and significant improvement, the music of *Icewind Dale* builds on the already impressive record of Black Isle Studios, fully meriting this Award (2000 Vault Network Awards, 2001).

Nevertheless, for increase in the production value of the game's score, the average length of each cue is similar to those of earlier SNES JRPGs however, coming in at just over a minute meaning that in-game at least, a significant amount of repetition is to be expected. In his review, Gann states that due to their shortness the score would be at times better suited for film than game. Much of the soundtrack is motivic in nature; fragments of melody fade in and out, often in contrasting instrumental families. This is a marked difference to the more thematic style of JRPGs and older WRPGs including Heberling's *Daggerfall* score – a notable comparison as Soule would go onto replace Heberling for the third iteration in the *Elder Scrolls* franchise. So too, are the swells within the music – dynamic crescendos and diminuendos that are used throughout the game's environmental tracks heard during periods of non-combat. Consequently, we are seeing a development of a genre style within WRPGs, that combines Hollywood cinematic fantasy tropes with an ambient style.

One of the few truly noticeable thematic pieces in the soundtrack is "Hrothgar's Home" with a prominent melodic line played on bassoon – as shown below in Fig. 2.35 ([audio track 2.22](#)). However, even here, the melody merely rises and falls in before being repeated a further two times. Supporting instruments such as the horns and the lower strings swell and fade in dynamics with a consistent tonic pedal underpinning the piece. The E natural causes a slight shift away from C minor and towards the Aeolian Dominant mode creating a slightly ethereal sound. As such, this is as much of an ambient track than anything shown so far and is notable for not being particularly noticeable. This is in much the same way as Soule's *Secrets of Evermore* or Uelmen's *Diablo* and *Diablo II* (which was released the same day); ambience was here to stay in the WRPG.

Icewind Dale musical score continues in much the same manner as Soule's writing for *Secret of Evermore* and that found in *Baldur's Gate* and through doing so, provides a now established level of coherence; relating to players of those games a sound that would reinforce not subvert like with JRPGs the visuals on screen. It obeys the eight-melody model and again expands upon it with the established inclusion of cues such as spiritual temples (for example 'Temple of Tempus' or 'Temple of the Forgotten God').

$\text{♩} = 100$

Upper Strings

Bassoons

Horns

Low Strings

Hand Drum

7

8^{va} + Piccolo

13

-Picc.

Flute

8^{va} + Picc.

18

8^{va} - Picc.

Fig. 2.37 – Short Score Transcription of “Hrothgar’s Home” from *Icewind Dale* by Jeremy Soule

The final game listed in this chapter was released on the short-lived Sega console – the *Dreamcast*⁸¹ – which had several RPGs released for it within its three-year lifespan. Of these, *Eternal Arcadia* (*Skies of Arcadia* in the US) stands out as being particularly noteworthy and was released on October 5, 2000. A typical “Hero’s Journey” narrative, its plot involves Vyse – an air pirate, together with his companions as they try to stop Empress Teodora of the Valuan Empire from gaining the “moon crystals” reawaken the Gigas – a series of ancient weapons – to take over the world. As with all CRPGs, the plot sees the player travel across many different locations; in *Eternal Arcadia*’s case, many of these are visually striking, being almost celestial in nature – floating cities are a staple of this game and the US release’s name change to *Skies of Arcadia* makes sense due to the airship that Vyse pilots being the main method of transport.

The game was one of the best reviewed games for the *Dreamcast* having 3D visuals, anime-style visuals and eclectic score as well as a producer – Rieko Kodama – who had worked on *Phantasy Star* back on the *Sega Master System*. For the soundtrack, two composers were responsible for its creation – Yutaka Minobe and Tatsuyuki Maeda. Several tracks in the score were recorded by the *Skies of Arcadia* Symphony Orchestra (Symon, 2019) and the game featured various uses of adaptive audio⁸² – most notably in combat where depending on how well the player is performing causes the cue to transition into different sections – something not common in JRPGs that used streaming audio of the time. Stylistically, the game pulls from various genres of music. Many tracks are designed for full orchestra in quite a cinematic way. Some like “Vyse’s Theme” combine this with an electric guitar, bass and drum kit in a more symphonic rock style. The track “Kingdom of Nasrad” makes use of sitar and has parts of the track in the D Phrygian scale to give a somewhat more ethnic feel. The European folk-like feel of the track “Remote Town” and the fairground-organ timbre heard in “Gag” all suggest international influences. As a game that sits right at the very end of Barton’s Platinum Age, *Skies of Arcadia* is arguably the pinnacle of what JRPG musical score design had been building towards. Varied, both in style and timbre, the game draws on the cultural heritage of various different styles of music, fusing together ideas into one coherent whole. Most of the vast array of musical cues are distinctly melody-based, a notable difference to the music found in *Baldur’s Gate* and *Icewind Dale* found in the West. Its ludic influences – the turn-based random battles feature adaptive audio – as well as the use of stingers show both an acceptance of the past and a push towards the future. For its narrative, it obeys all four of Chatman’s components – cues that represent (the diverse) settings, actions, characters and happenings.

⁸¹ Sega’s *Dreamcast* was arguably ahead of its time, being technically the first in the sixth generation of consoles. However, due to its lack of popularity and being a console that overlaps Barton’s Platinum and Modern Ages, I have opted to include the 2000 released JRPG *Eternal Arcadia* in the Platinum Age.

⁸² Adaptive audio according to Collins, (2008, p. 4) is ‘sound that reacts to the game states, responding to various in-game parameters such as time-ins, time-outs, player health, enemy health, and so on.’

2.5 Conclusion

The end of Barton's Platinum Age proves that the CRPG genre was in rude health across both the JRPG and WRPG divide. In both cases, the music was being critically acclaimed as technology allowed the incorporation of samples and streaming audio on a much greater scale than what had come before. A myriad of musical styles and timbres had been fused into JRPGs following the titles such as *Ys*, *Phantasy Star* and *Final Fantasy V* with their multitude of narrative genres combining with the base 'fantasy'. By doing so, coherence with the visuals, is achieved through incoherence in style; a non-homogenous sound was needed to arguably help players to accept the illogicalities that they were seeing. These cues would remain integrated in a continuous-looped manner as cues in the original *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy* had been. Meanwhile, WRPGs led by Uelmen, Soule and Hoenig were embracing a traditionally Western-orchestral timbre with synthesisers and rock-elements to create a fusion of their own. Ambience was the key here and with the vast majority of WRPGs either now being Action-RPGs or 'realtime with pause'⁸³ this reduced the need for introductory – or even victory – stingers that had come to be associated with combat in the vast array of JRPGs. Because of the ambient-nature of these cues, the vast majority of tracks are entirely un-melodic, aiming to create an atmosphere whilst maintaining an arguably subservient role to the rest of the elements of the game.

The eight-cue model first introduced in *Ultima III* and then refined with *Dragon Quest* is by this point in somewhat of a state of flux. As a reminder, *Dragon Quest's* eight cues were: Overture, Castle, Town, Field, Dungeon, Battle, Final Battle and March (an ending theme). Due to the divergence between JRPGs and WRPGs, this model based on western medieval terms now suits WRPGs far more than JRPGs. The medievalism found in WRPGs means that although the model will need expanding to include other cue archetypes such as spiritual areas (heard in churches and temples for example), the base model is still largely applicable. JRPGs on the other hand with their non-homogenous sound, illogicality of narrative and merging of narrative genres means that for the vast majority of these, the model needs to change. This will become even more apparent in Chapter Three as we move into Barton's Modern Age.

Finally, by the turn of the millennium, twenty-two years had past since the first CRPG with sound (*Beneath Apple Manor*) – close to a human generation. As such, it is not unreasonable to suggest that as we enter into the Modern Age, that the musical soundtracks created for these games may well have been created by composers who had only known a world where video games – and CRPGs – existed. The notion of coherency would have been built upon the games they experienced in their youth and again it is not unreasonable to suggest that the influence of the games in this historical account may well have impacted their design. Using

⁸³ This term has come to mean a game where the action happens in real time where all the characters and enemies are active within the setting of the world. The player can issue order to their avatar(s) and perform actions such as melee attacks or spells. However, for a strategic advantage (and sometimes to truly understand what is happening on screen), the player has the ability to pause the game, survey the world and issue orders. As soon as the game is un-paused, these actions are immediately executed.

van Elferen's ALI model of immersion, her second component – musical literacy – is arguably now established for players and arguably future composers based upon the games found in this chapter. Additionally, her third component also shows signs of being incorporated through the interactivity – games such as *Eternal Arcadia* feature adaptive music and other games such as *Final Fantasy VI* and *VII* among others, make use of leitmotifs (Terra's and Aerith's themes respectively), to show that music to represent these characters are not fixed but in flux as the player progresses with the story. The other theories laid out in Chapter One are valid here as a result: a measure of expectation now exists in both composer and player and a generation of expectation and nostalgia could now be tapped into and built upon with the aesthetics of the different cues now fully diversified between the JRPG and WRPG divide.

In the next chapter, we approach Barton's 'Modern Age'. This will provide necessary information as to how CRPG titles in the 21st Century have built upon the musical scores of those found in Chapter Two and how titles continue to either expand or move away from the eight-melody model of *Ultima III* and *Dragon Quest*. In turn, this information will then be used to create new models of coherency for both JRPGs and WRPG alike.

Appendices

- **Appendix 2.1** – Description of a typical D&D game in 2018 by user 'danstu' on Reddit.
- **Appendix 2.2** – Tracklist of the AD&D "First Quest: The Music".
- **Appendix 2.3** – Table of Home Video-Game Consoles by Date and Country.
- **Appendix 2.4** – The box cover art to *Ultima III: Exodus* – released for the Apple II.
- **Appendix 2.5** – Score for "Fear of the Heavens" – the accompanying music for the Secret of Mana title screen by Hiroki Kikuta
- **Appendix 2.6** – Transcription of "Terra's Theme" from *Final Fantasy VI* by Nobuo Uematsu
- **Appendix 2.7** – Transcription of "Lonely Halls" from *Secret of Evermore* by Jeremy Soule
- **Appendix 2.8** – Transcription of "Take Up the Cross" from *Tales of Phantasia* by Motoi Sakuraba
- **Appendix 2.9** – Transcription of "Aerith's Theme" from *Final Fantasy VII* by Nobuo Uematsu
- **Appendix 2.10** – Transcription of "One Winged Angel" from *Final Fantasy VII* by Nobuo Uematsu created through a MIDI import of "lb2.mid" from the Windows version of the game into Avid Sibelius Ultimate.

CHAPTER 3:

A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN FANTASY CRPGs

– THE MODERN AGE

3.1 Introduction

Both Barton in addition to Schules, Peterson and Picard end their categorisation of CRPGs at the turn of the millennium. Certainly, for Barton, the ‘modern age’ was only eight years old as of the time of his writing. Yet for Schules, Peterson and Picard, they have almost two decades worth of computer role-playing history to account for, a period far longer than their ‘Golden Age’ and far more established than their ‘Origins and Beginnings’. As such, within this chapter, we will explore single-player fantasy CRPGs from 2000 to 2020 and break this period of time down into the console generations defined by Sony and Microsoft who have continually launched their consoles since the inception of the original Xbox within a short time period of one another. Whilst this does not necessarily tally with PC – or indeed handheld – game design, it does at least allow for this span of two decades to be split into logical sections. As we witnessed throughout Chapter Two, the eight-melody model of *Ultima III* and *Dragon Quest* is in need of expanding in the case of WRPGs, or being somewhat replaced in the case of JRPGs. By the end of this chapter, a new model is proposed.

3.2 The History of Music in Single-Player Fantasy CRPGs: 2000 – 2020

3.2.1 The Modern Age (PS2/Xbox/GameCube Generation): 2000 Onwards

The Modern Age of CRPGs and their music begins with a notable piece of video game history – the arrival of Sony’s *PlayStation 2* console on March 4, 2000 which would go on to become the best-selling games console in history (Sirani, 2019). Moving from CD-ROMs to DVDs, the storage capacity for games on disk rose significantly. With that came more technically advanced assets across the various game elements such as a higher polygon count for the graphics, larger and more detailed textures and a rise in storage space for FMV cutscenes. This applied to Windows PCs and Macs as well with many games starting to transition from CDs to DVDs around this time.

Square released a new console JRPG in 2001 in the form of *Final Fantasy X* for the *PlayStation 2* on July 19, 2001. The game’s narrative has an interesting twist (briefly explained in Chapter One) to the “Hero’s Journey” narrative with the principal character Tidus returning home by fading out of existence due to him being a dream or memory of an earlier time period. The narrative structure sees the game set in the fantasy world of Spira; a world inspired by the South Pacific, Thailand and Japan (Square, 2001). The plot involves Tidus, the principal protagonist, waking up in the future after an attack by the monster “Sin” on his homeland. This future has none of the technology that existed in his time; instead, humanity has reverted back to a

more tribal state. This is a notable departure from the sci-fi/fantasy blend of *Final Fantasy VII* and *VIII* and the medieval feel of *Final Fantasy IX*. *Final Fantasy X* had many notable milestones within the franchise, amongst which it was the first full 3D entry, it was the first to have a direct sequel (*Final Fantasy X-2*) and it was the first *Final Fantasy* not to be solely composed by Nobuo Uematsu with composers Masashi Hamauzu and Junya Nakano also being brought on board of which Uematsu contributed 51 cues, Hamauzu twenty, and Nakano eighteen (Inoue, N.D.). Another notable point for the series, *Final Fantasy X* does not have the main theme (introduced in the original *Final Fantasy* and presented above) anywhere within the game – the first time that it had not been incorporated since *Final Fantasy II* in 1988.

Stylistically the game – as with many JRPGs – has a myriad of styles inspired by a wealth of different cultures; another case of a JRPG incorporating a multitude of styles and avoiding homogeny. As expected, this extends to the game’s musical score: the country blues style of “Ject’s Theme”, the a cappella Gregorian chant variations of “Song of Prayer”, the heavy metal (technically Death Metal) style of “Otherworld” and the multifaceted timbre of “People of the North Pole” which features distant bagpipes. With regards to the “Song of Prayer” (and the Aeons that sing them falling silent at the end of the game), Stefan X. Greenfield-Casas postulates that this could reflect Japan’s cultural evolution with its loss of faith in its transition to modernity (Greenfield-Casas, 2017, p. 25). Other examples of the wealth of different musical styles include “The Blazing Desert” which is one of the more dissonant pieces in the game having a combination of synths, gamelan percussion and frequent but short uses of a plucked stringed instrument – possibly meant to represent a buzuk – and the big-band inspired “Brass de Chocobo”. Another notable international influence can be heard in the track “Blitz Off” which bears a striking resemblance to Tracy Young’s cover of Madonna’s “What It Feels Like for a Girl”.

For the title theme, Uematsu used a track he had originally composed for a flautist and friend. He states; ‘[s]he asked me to compose the song for a recital. I made it, but later thought that it was a little bit too gloomy. I decided to keep it for something later. Later, when I was in charge of making music for *Final Fantasy X*, the staff was calling, asking where the music was. I said, “Okay, just take this one”’ (Uematsu, 2009). This piece – later titled “To Zanakand” – has since become popular amongst fans from the entire *Final Fantasy* franchise. As with *Final Fantasy IX*, this title theme is distinctly un-bombastic, in direct contrast to the title themes to *Final Fantasy VII* and *VIII*. Scored for solo piano in the key of E minor, it is shown below in Fig. 3.1 and heard in [audio track 3.01](#). This is a distinctly intimate piece: a solo piano played at a distinctly subdued dynamic with subtle changes to the tempo as arguably expected of a solo piano piece in this style. It stands in contrast to many fantasy CRPGs that announce the game’s main title with fanfare and bombast or create a sense of mysticism through harp arpeggios that previous *Final Fantasy* titles had done. By doing so, we are led to believe that this is either a smaller-scale adventure than the grandiose epics of previous games, or that arguably this is about the melancholic relationships between characters. This again pushes characters and their relationships to the fore far more than its WRPG counterparts.



Fig. 3.1 – ‘To Zanarkand’ from *Final Fantasy X* by Nobuo Uematsu

Final Fantasy X like its name-sake, stands at something of a crossroads. Continuing with the fixed camera of its three predecessors, it was the first to move into 3D. It was the first to have multiple composers and the last main-series single-player game to have Nobuo Uematsu compose a score for it. It draws from multiple

different cultures – both narratively and musically – and was the first to have a full-sequel game created for it. As with many JRPGs, many of the cues are very thematic, featuring memorable melodies that are exploited through the use of leitmotifs for the principal characters, namely Yuna and Tidus. Timbrally, the game’s score incorporates a vast array of instruments and synthesised effects continuing in the JRPG musical tradition argued thus far.

Aside from *Pokémon*, one of the few other handheld CRPGs featured in this study of music in single-player fantasy computer role-playing games is *Golden Sun* – released by Capcom for the *Game Boy Advance* on August 1, 2001 to critical acclaim. So highly did IGN think of the game, their opening paragraph for the review states; ‘this game could arguably be one of the best 2D-based Japanese RPGs created for any system. And yes, that includes *Final Fantasy*’ (Harris, 2001). Conceived as a game in two parts; the sequel *Golden Sun: The Lost Age* was released the very next year in which players could import their saved game from the first to the second game. The narrative of the game is nothing if not predictable by this point; a team of four heroes follows the “Hero’s Journey” theory. The narrative structure too, is similar to what has been discussed already; following a plot similar to some of the earlier *Final Fantasy* games. Arguably a title that built upon the nostalgia of earlier 2D JRPGs of the NES and SNES generations such as *Dragon Quest*, the game is set in the fantasy world of “Weyard” – a medieval-esque land with elemental magic as the core plot point of the game. This sees it from a narrative perspective as reflective rather than progressive looking back to titles from the Golden Age of CRPGs.

The composer Motoi Sakuraba was brought on board for music for both *Golden Sun* and its sequel. As with the *Tales* series, there is little in regard to the music by way of timbral or stylistic homogeny. Electric guitar, is brought together with synths, orchestral instruments, voices, drum kit, bass, acoustic guitar and more. Nevertheless, whilst timbrally and stylistically, the musical score is eclectic, one musical element continues in a tradition of JRPGs – melody. Harmonically, the game inherits many of the JRPG tradition by using predominantly a major/minor set of tonalities, however, there are cues such as “Lamakan Desert” that use are modal; in that case, the Phrygian mode on E. Additionally, there are stylistic links to the music of other games; the “Prologue” for instance is very similar Sugiyama’s *Dragon Quest* main theme with its overture-like qualities: a fanfare introduction, a walking bass and a strong crotchet-based melody at the start of phrases and a march-like feel. In many of the action tracks however, a minor tonality is predominantly used with prominent roles for the bass and drum kit as Sakuraba focuses more on rock-elements. The combat theme is shown below in Fig. 3.2 ([audio track 3.02](#)):

Fig. 3.2 - Transcription of bars 2 – 9 of “Battle Theme” from *Golden Sun* by Motoi Sakuraba

Golden Sun’s legacy is similar to *Final Fantasy VII*. As with that game, it is not that it does anything particularly new – or at least not in the wider JRPG sub-genre as a whole. Instead, what it does do is refine everything that had come before but now on a hand-held console. Timbrally, the music is much similar to those games found on the SNES and Sakuraba continues his bombastic style found in the *Tales* series of games that were only on console and brought it to a hand-held device. Here though, we possibly have a level of incoherence – the fantasy genre is not particularly combined with any other fictional genre and consequently, the game’s narrative is more logical than many of the JRPG titles listed since Barton’s *Golden Age Part I*. Consequently, there could be argued at this point that we have a certain degree of incoherence with regards to a non-homogenous score, accompanying more logical fantasy fiction.

At the complete opposite end of the CRPG spectrum, the WRPG *Arcanum: Of Steamworks and Magick Obscura* was released on August 21 2001. Developed by the Californian-based developer Troika Games, the narrative structure of the game sees it set on the continent of Arcanum which – according to designer

Timothy Cain – was a ‘Tolkienesque fantasy world that has recently experienced an industrial revolution’ (Cain, 2000). This dichotomy of magic and steampunk technology permeates the game right from its start; the IFS Zephyr – a luxury zeppelin – is shot down by monoplanes piloted by half-ogre bandits. Two people survive the crash – the first “The Living One” is the main character. The second is an old gnome who manages to give the main character a magic silver ring to give to “the boy” before dying of his injuries. The rest of the game plays out with the main character searching for the origin of the ring, before discovering more about the bandits who attacked the zeppelin and ultimately the dark force behind it all.

The composer for the game was Ben Houge and his approach to the score was vastly different than the majority of the other soundtracks to CRPGs; both before and since. Instead of the typical Romantic-orchestra palate that had been synonymous with the genre – or the pop/rock influence that was making its way into JRPG soundtracks, Houge instead reduced the timbre to mainly just a string quartet with light percussion on two tracks (consisting of marimba, djembe and rainstick for “Qintarra”) and two ambient pieces for synthesizer. According to Houge, the soundtrack consists of ‘more than 50 minutes of music in total’ (Houge, 2001). For each of the string quartet parts, these were not synthesised, instead being recorded by four members of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. According to Houge:

The first thing I was told about *Arcanum* was the central conflict of the game: magic versus technology. This idea was so interesting and unique that I considered carefully how to best reflect it in the music. I presented a couple of ideas to the guys at Troika, and we finally settled on a sort of musical anachronism: a score centered around the styles and textures of Renaissance, medieval, and early music, but performed by a characteristic ensemble of the Victorian era, the string quartet (Houge, 2001).

Houge’s notes on his personal website are vast with regards to his score for the game including comments on the music, notes on the recording sessions, the soundtrack credits and his inspirations whilst working on the score. In another highly unusual move, Sierra Entertainment posted the sheet music for the entire soundtrack on the official *Arcanum* website. For reference, the score for “The Demise of the Zephyr” is shown below in Fig. 3.3 ([audio track 3.03](#)):

Allegro con moto ♩ = 140

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Cello

p

mp

mp

Measures 1-5. Violin I and II are silent. Viola and Cello play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Dynamics: *p* for Cello, *mp* for Viola and Violin I/II at measure 5.

6

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

p

mp

p

mp

mp

Measures 6-10. Violin I and II play a melodic line. Viola and Cello continue the rhythmic pattern. Dynamics: *p* for Violin I/II, *mp* for Viola and Cello.

11

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vlc.

mf

mp

mf

mp

mf

mp

Measures 11-15. Violin I and II play a melodic line. Viola and Cello continue the rhythmic pattern. Dynamics: *mf* for Violin I/II, *mp* for Viola and Cello.

Fig. 3.3 - Bars 1 – 28 from the score for “The Demise of the Zephyr” from *Arcanum: Of Steamworks & Magick Obscura* by Ben Houge.

This is a fascinating anomaly in comparison to many of the fantasy WRPGs being released around the turn of the millennium. For its setting, the game bears some semblance to a JRPG like *Final Fantasy VI*, which combined fantasy and an industrialised environment. For the music, the game bears a much stronger relationship to older titles such as *Daggerfall*, with Houge creating a score for the most part that was playable rather than being composed in a DAW.⁸⁴ A distinct melody can be seen in the first violin across the cue much like older WRPGs and contemporary for the time JRPGs. Whilst there is a metre-change, this is not done to disguise a regular sense of metre like Soule, Uelmen or Hoenig might do, but instead is done as a sectional change. Timbrally, the game is fairly homogenous across its score – unlike JRPGs – but departs from the orchestral texture found in many of its competitors. Additionally, like with Heberling’s score for *Daggerfall*, this was published online – albeit through the publisher’s website rather than Houge’s own – allowing both fans, critics and academics alike to see an exact transcription of what was created for the game.

One of the more surreal franchises of CRPGs to be developed is the series *Kingdom Hearts*, released in Japan for the *PlayStation 2* on March 28, 2002. Made in collaboration between Square and the Walt Disney

⁸⁴ Digital Audio Workstation

Company, the game is an action-RPG which sees the main character Sora team up with Donald Duck, Goofy whilst meeting a variety of both Disney characters in addition to those from Square's *Final Fantasy* series. This first game in the series features a more traditional "Hero's Journey" narrative – although its sequels often deviate from this significantly. The plot sees Sora along with Donald and Goofy aim to stop Maleficent and other evil entities from kidnapping the seven princesses in order to unlock "Kingdom Hearts" – a place of absolute power. Each princess inhabits their own 'world' – separate to each other's – but able to be travelled to and from via the "Gummi ship"; an inter-world spaceship gifted to Sora by King Mickey.

The composer for the game was Yoko Shimomura who combined a variety of pre-existing Disney melodies drawn from the various films the princesses are from, with her own original compositions for the game. The Disney pieces are as follows:

- "Mickey Mouse Club March" – Jimmie Dodd
- "Winnie The Pooh" – Robert B. Sherman and Richard M. Sherman
- "This is Halloween" – Danny Elfman
- "Under the Sea" – Alan Menken and Howard Ashman

Unlike for *Final Fantasy* however, the series' main theme did not come from Shimomura. Instead, two songs were written by the Japanese American pop singer Hikaru Utada; "Hikari" and "Passion" – known in the English versions of the game as "Simple and Clean" and "Sanctuary" respectively. Cues include – in addition to those listed above – an exotic island, a mystical town, "Wonderland" from *Alice in Wonderland* (dir. Geronimi, Jackson & Luske, 1951), Olympia from *Hercules* (dir. Clements & Musker, 1997), the jungle, "Agrabah" from *Aladdin* (dir. Clements & Musker, 1992), the belly of "Monstro" from *Pinocchio* (dir. Sharpsteen & Luske, 1940), "Neverland" from *Peter Pan* (dir. Geronimi, Jackson & Luske, 1953) and "Maleficent's Castle" from *Sleeping Beauty* (dir. Geronimi et. al, 1959). For each of these, Shimomura created a battle track based upon some of the elements found in the area's environmental track. For these listed environments, Shimomura exploits expected clichés; a calypso feel for the exotic island, pan pipes and various drums for the jungle, a C# Phrygian tonality for the "Agrabah" area etcetera. Nevertheless, Shimomura's arguably greatest achievement with this soundtrack is to blend her original compositions with the stylistic and timbral properties of the various signature songs written for the corresponding Disney films in the multitude of areas that are explored in the game. This is undoubtedly one of the most elaborate use of musical fusions and stylistic borrowing found in any JRPG. After all, the music for the Disney films themselves were often a myriad of different styles – Alan Menken (responsible for *Hercules*, *Aladdin* and *The Little Mermaid* amongst others), created stylistically varied tracks within many of the films he wrote for⁸⁵ and

⁸⁵ *Hercules* for instance – in addition to the many Broadway-inspired pieces – features a gospel-choir inspired piece. *Aladdin* borrows from jazz and *The Little Mermaid* borrows from Calypso.

to keep a sense of coherency across a game that features multiple areas from different films, multiple composers and a convoluted plot and diverse array of characters is an achievement.

The same year, Jeremy Soule would score all three of the highest grossing CRPGs; *Dungeon Siege*, *The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind* (henceforth known as just *Morrowind*) and *Neverwinter Nights with Morrowind* in particular enhancing Soule's reputation considerably. The game itself returned to the setting of their previous games, to the high fantasy continent of Tamriel where the game focuses on the island of Vvardenfell in the country of Morrowind. Like *Arena* and *Daggerfall* before it, the game is heavily influenced by *Dungeons & Dragons*, but this time – according to Todd Howard, the project leader – with the additional elements of steampunk and the artwork, architecture and cultures of the Middle East and East Asia (Howard, 2001). In a further interview, he states:

By setting the game in the land of Tamriel's dark elves, it opened huge new avenues for creating cultures and sites that are not traditionally seen in a fantasy setting. At the same time, we made an effort to keep the classic fantasy setting of our "Imperial" culture, so that the player would see familiar things, which creates even more contrast against the unfamiliar (Howard, 2003).

As stated above, Eric Heberling was replaced with Jeremy Soule for this third title in the series. Stylistically, Soule's score does not completely coincide with Howard's earlier description of the game; whilst it is a fantastical western soundtrack there are only vague hints of other cultures within it for instance in "The Road Most Travelled" where there is a slight folk influence with even this being European in nature. Soule describes the soundtrack as being intentionally minimalist where he tried 'to paint in soft tones so the ear wouldn't get worn out playing the game for 100 hours' (Soule, 2007). As with *Icewind Dale*, Soule relies on ambience within the score, although there is more of a sense of thematic writing than in that game, as Soule makes use of his main theme within some of the battle cues – one titled in the OST as 'Dance of Swords'. For the environmental tracks, once again dynamic swells and fades are particularly notable, as is the use of a slow harmonic progression and an often-deliberate attempt to not settle either in a major or minor tonality for too long. Inspiration is arguably drawn from fantasy films as much as it from other video games and CRPGs. By way of evidence, take the cue – named in the OST as "Peaceful Waters" or in the game files as "mx_explore_2.mp3". Heard in game as a piece played near the docks in the opening area, the cue transitions from harp to a horn-led piece, accompanied by strings and light woodwind. There is little sense of pulse within the cue creating a feel of ambience and it is difficult to suggest whether this is done through changes to tempi or through metre-changes.

Several reviews felt that the game's soundtrack was too short however, with *IGN* stating 'The very first time you boot up Morrowind, you'll be treated to a memorable, stirring theme... You'll proceed to hear it literally every five minutes or so during play. How such a short soundtrack can benefit a game as big as *Morrowind* is anyone's guess' (Kasavin, 2002). Soule was nominated for "Outstanding Achievement in Original Music

Composition” for the 2003 *Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences’ Achievement Awards* but lost to *Medal of Honor: Frontline* composed by Michael Giacchino.

Whilst this thesis is deliberately avoiding much discussion on the actual implementation of tracks for it would warrant more detail than the scope of this text allows, we can briefly examine the use of the cues here thanks to the information about the game’s score that is readily available online.⁸⁶ The game files for the *Windows* version of the game reveal five music types with regards to its implementation: battle, explore, special, video. Here we see some telling information reinforcing further a pattern that has been developing over CRPG musical score design. Of Chatman’s four components of a narrative, actions such as ‘battle’ are adhered to. So too, are setting through ‘explore’ and happenings through both stingers that are referred to as ‘special’ and cues to accompany cutscenes in ‘video’. What is not seen are any character themes. By this point in WRPg history, this can only be argued as expected. Players have a certain expectation that in WRPgs, coherency is achieved through accompanying music to exploration, combat and cutscenes that will help push the plot. Whilst there may well be both playable and non-playable characters that the player will encounter during their play-through of the game, musically, these are unlikely to have individual character themes.

Finally, consider the parallels between this game and the “Midnight Syndicate” album discussed in section 2.2. Released only a year apart from one another, the coherency of the WRPg was now firmly established, beginning with *Diablo*, *Secret of Evermore* and *Baldur’s Gate* before Soule’s own work with *Icwind Dale*. For high fantasy WRPgs, in the manner of *Dungeons & Dragons*, timbrally, strings, percussion and brass dominate with choir and harp often used to either support or to create an air of mystery, just as it was with “Midnight Syndicate”. Neither are particularly melodic, both are distinctly ambient in nature and whilst there are subtle-timbral differences in the synths used, it would arguably be not too unsettling to have cues replaced between these two pieces of media. Whilst certainly this statement is controversial and bound to warrant responses, I argue that by the early to mid-2000s, the typical sound found in WRPgs was now firmly established through timbre and style. As this history continues, fewer WRPgs stand out as being anomalies or exceptions. In this sense, we can state that the model of coherent musical score design in both forms of the CRPG was, for the most part, now a tradition.

On March 13, 2003 *Final Fantasy X-2* was released for *PlayStation 2*. This was the first direct sequel to any *Final Fantasy* game and development on the title began – according to Yoshinori Kitase, the director of *Final Fantasy X* – following the ‘short story/move titled “Eternal Calm” in *FFX International*,⁸⁷ which was released in Japan in January 2002’ (Kitase, 2003). This short story showed the world of Spira two years after the event of the first game and a major in-world cultural shift had occurred. Character designer Tetsuya Tsukamoto states in *IGN*’s interview; ‘I would say that the differences are due to the changes in Spira between FFX and FFX-2.

⁸⁶ Bethesda’s *Elder Scrolls* series has had a long tradition amongst the PC fan community of mods (modifications) to the game and as such, the music’s implementation has been well-documented.

⁸⁷ The *Final Fantasy* games are often shortened to FF_ where _ is the Roman numeral iteration.

FFX had more of a darker, religious feel, whereas in FFX-2, there is a huge cultural change.’ This “cultural change” is reflected in a myriad of ways within the game, from the character designs, to the lighter feel to the plot and the music – perfectly illustrated in the game’s opening scene which sees Yuna performing a diegetic pop song in a stadium to thousands of spectators. For the first time, Nobuo Uematsu was not involved in the soundtrack to a *Final Fantasy* game; instead, the composers Noriko Matsueda and Takahito Eguchi were brought in. Director of *Final Fantasy X-2* – Motomu Toriyama – states:

As symbolized in Yuna's live performance in the opening, we wanted to incorporate a pop feeling even with the music this time, which is very different from the typical Final Fantasy world. Ms. Matsueda and Mr. Eguchi were a perfect fit to the changes we were trying to achieve so we asked those two to handle the music for FFX-2. In fact, the drastic change in the music is one of the big differences that gave new direction for FFX-2. I wanted Mr. Uematsu to participate but due to other projects, we weren't able to have him on board for FFX-2 (Toriyama, 2003).

To give a visual impression of the differences between *Final Fantasy X* and its sequel, consider Fig. 3.4 and 3.5 – each one of Yuna, the main female protagonist in both games:

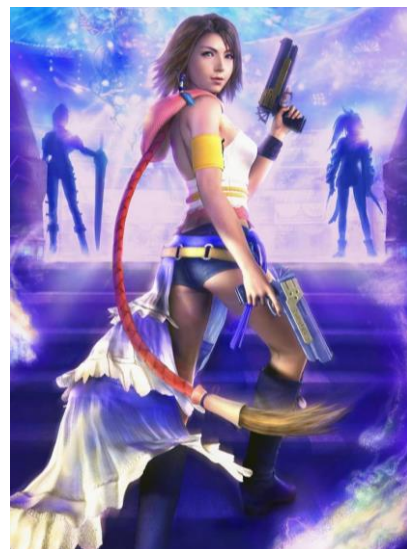


Fig. 3.4 and 3.5 – The character Yuna in *Final Fantasy X* and *X-2* respectively showing the differences in costume-style with the pop-culture influences more obvious in *FFX-2*.

Final Fantasy X-2 is arguably the most dissimilar title found in JRPGs. It is undoubtedly a product of the early 2000s, riding the pop-culture wave of US female artists such as Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and Jennifer Lopez. When cues are not featuring a driving pop/rock beat on drum kit, accompanied by bass, synthesisers and guitar, the cues are often in a piano ballad style. Whilst there are pieces found within the game’s score that are reminiscent of its predecessor, this is a score much lighter and more in line with pop-culture than anything that the *Final Fantasy* series had done before or since. Consequently, we can argue that *Final*

Fantasy X-2 is as much an exception to the JRPG musical tradition at this point as *Arcanum: Of Steamworks & Magick Obscura* music score was to WRPGs only two years earlier.

The CRPG *Fable* was released for the original Xbox on September 14, 2004. Developed by Big Blue Box – a satellite company of the British developer Lionhead Studios Limited – *Fable* takes place in Albion; a land of a number of city-states separated by fields and forests. Whilst the setting and writing was distinctly fantastical, it was created with a British brand of humour running through it, similar in style to the works of Terry Pratchett, Douglas Adams or Monty Python (Dingo, 2003). The music for the game was predominantly composed by British composer Russell Shaw with the exception of the main theme by Danny Elfman – the first time the Hollywood composer had written anything for a video game. The three-minute-long main theme was the only aspect of the game Elfman was involved in stating ‘[i]n the context of the game, there's still a light side, a dark side, and an action-packed side to the adventure... It's a fairy tale with monsters, battles, heroes – all the standard elements are there. I'm simply setting a tone in the title sequence that states for the audience what's about to happen’ (Elfman, 2004). At Elfman’s insistence, the soundtrack was performed by an orchestra utilising The Philharmonia Orchestra although this was supplemented with synthesised effects. Shaw had to use Elfman’s theme within the rest of the game’s score stating:

Both the Carter brothers are big Tim Burton fans and the direction for the game was very much towards that 'Sleepy Hollow'/'Edward Scissorhands' feel... getting Danny Elfman involved pretty much set the scene for the theme of the game, but aside from this I had to weave the theme into compositions representing graveyards, creepy woods, friendly villages etc. Much of the inspiration for this came from the finished graphics and conceptual art for these regions (Shaw, 2004).

The game won “Outstanding Original Music Composition” D.I.C.E. Award in 2004 – the only CRPG to have won this award. How Shaw manipulates the orchestral recordings is noteworthy; particularly with tracks such as “Chapel of Evil” providing an unsettled sound through the use of vocal and stringed instrumental glissandi, drone-like accompaniment and a relentless percussive pulse, although much of the emotional effects of the tracks, Shaw attributes to the players of The Philharmonia (ibid). In relation to other WRPGs, *Fable* follows convention by making use of a standard Romantic-style orchestra with wordless-choir. Much of the music is ambient in style, utilising the same sort of features both stylistically and timbrally that Uelmen and Soule employ with few of the cues having any real sense of melody. There are exceptions – just as there are in the aforementioned composers’ games – ‘Oakvale’ for instance is the most melodic cue in the score save for Elfman’s main theme. The score is not particularly long; with 77 minutes of unique music – longer than Soule’s score for *Morrowind*, but not in comparison to JRPGs. Shaw admits that he would have liked to compose more, saying that it ‘would have been great to have written a few more combat music tracks and maybe some creature specific pieces’ (ibid). This could be argued to suggest that he wanted to write character-specific cues, which would be a divergence away from the WRPG style that was not incorporating character themes.

Most of the WRPGs listed so far have been US-made games and as such it is interesting to discuss this British CRPG. Nevertheless, the music cannot escape a US influence, with Elfman's main theme underpinning all of Shaw's cues for the rest of the game resulting in a soundtrack that is far closer to that of US-made CRPGs than those in Japan. Fable's cues follow the eight-melody model with again, a cue for a spiritual temple being included, suggesting once more that this model needs expanding for WRPGs.

The next year, another WRPG made a notable impact in its musical score; *Jade Empire* – released for Xbox on April 12, 2005. This game had a setting that was based on Chinese mythology and the plot sees the player take the role of the last surviving Spirit Monk, who embarks on a quest to defeat the evil forces of the corrupt emperor Sun Hai. *Jade Empire* is a little like a JRPG in so far as this is quite a linear game; areas are not returned to once played through and follows a fairly narrow progression in terms of plot. There are choices for the player to make; some of which affect the story and gameplay – for instance depending on the player's decision, there are three endings. Nevertheless, this should not be compared to a game like *Morrowind* which is much more of an "open world" game. The score for *Jade Empire* was written by Jack Wall who – in an interview with *IGN* – suggest that there is over 95 minutes of music in the game (Wall, 2005). He goes onto state:

[W]e elected to take the sampled orchestra path, but with a special focus on a Chinese and Asian instrumental palette. Sort of an "East meets West" approach. I hired and worked with Zhiming Han who consulted with me on using Chinese instruments in the score. He was just an amazing help. First, he contracted all the musicians, most of whom, don't speak any English or very little. Second, he would take my parts and translate them to Chinese music notation... And he would translate my intentions during the sessions. Also, I did 3 or 4 different full-on percussion sessions with large rooms full of beautiful and very exotic Asian percussion instruments (ibid).

In addition to the ethnic percussion sonority described, Wall makes use of various other Eastern instruments within the score. The game's end-credits state the use of Chinese bamboo flutes, yangqin, bawu, guzheng, erhu, junghu, pipa, suona and taiko. These are particularly noticeable in tracks such as the opening cue, "The Way of the Open Palm". The D pentatonic scale is heard by the plucked stringed instruments in "Hills and Fields" and an emphasis on percussion features in combat cues such as "Into the Fray". In each of these pieces – and across the score as a whole – there are discernable and followable melodies, often led by ethnic instruments. This is what makes this game's score so noteworthy. Certainly, Wall employs the orchestral timbres that WRPGs had become synonymous with. It was a rare example of a Western composer not just hinting at an ethnic style, but fully fusing it together with something familiar and as such is a notable exception to the typical WRPG sound established by the likes of Soule. Nevertheless, when considering its cue placement, it follows the eight-melody model reasonably directly. What is not present are any character cues; a sign by this point that *Jade Empire* is much more closely related to WRPGs, than to JRPGs, despite the

narrative setting being China and thus, much closer to Japan. For the game, Wall won “Best Original Soundtrack Album” from the *Game Audio Network Guild* in 2006.⁸⁸

Somewhat disrupting the chronology that is presented in this chapter is the 2008 game *Persona 4* released on July 10 of that year. *Persona 4* was released exclusively for *PlayStation 2*⁸⁹ – two and a half years after the release of the *PlayStation 3*. The fourth title in the *Persona* series, the narrative structure sees the game set in Inaba – a rural fictional Japanese town. The player plays as a silent high school student (named Yu Narukami in *Persona 4 Golden*) who – along with his fellow peers from the town’s high-school – must use Personas to investigate the culprit behind a series of murders that has plagued the town. As the plot develops, it is revealed that the murders are of supernatural in origin and a battle between gods and goddesses and the persona-powered students ensues.

The music to the game was composed by Shoji Meguro with assistance from Atsushi Kitajoh and Ryuta Kozuka. The music is considerably influenced by J-Pop; not least because of several J-Pop style songs composed especially for the game (‘Pursuing My True Self’, ‘Signs of Love’, ‘Your Affection’) – a trend very much established by now. Much of the soundtrack has a notably lyrical melody with subservient accompaniment making use of stereotypical pop timbres; drums, bass, synth pads etcetera. This undoubtedly relates to the setting of the narrative structure rather than being influenced by the fantastical elements of the plot; emphasis is far more on the high-school and its students.

What Meguro’s soundtrack portrays therefore, is a constant reinforcement of the ‘the urban fantasy’ (Whitbrook, 2015); a phrase that commentators use to describe the *Persona* series. This is a series that mixes fantasy, horror and psychological exploration with high school students and it is no surprise therefore that the fantasy element is relegated from a musical perspective compared to the popular style more commonly associated with Japanese youth. In this way, it is not too dissimilar from both trailers and the underscore to high-school related anime of the time such as *Angel Beats* (dir. Kishi, 2010) and live-action dramas such as *Heavenly Forest* (dir. Shinjo, 2006). As a JRPG, cue placement is once again entirely unrelatable to the eight-melody template; there are no castles, fields and the whole game is set in a town, school or its surrounding areas, so moving between field and town as was the norm for *Dragon Quest* is void here.

As we end the Modern Age (PS2/Xbox/GameCube Generation), it is not unreasonable to suggest that – as argued above – the coherency of the WRPG has been truly established. Timbrally and stylistically, the cues from many games follow a trend that began with *Baldur’s Gate*. There are deviations – *Jade Empire* is one example – but at its core, the game’s musical score still follows an orchestral palate. Utilising Chatman, three out of four components of a narrative are typically accompanied – that of Actions, Happenings and Settings – though few WRPGs sought to include distinct music for characters. For JRPGs, coherency has been

⁸⁸ The website is now an archive - <https://archive.is/5YQ8> [Accessed June 2019].

⁸⁹ A later *PS Vita* port was released in 2012 however.

established through the use of melody. Style – and timbre – are consistently varied with inspiration pulled from a multitude of cultures as J-Pop had done before it, but texturally (again, like J-Pop), melody and accompaniment is the established trend. Cue types in JRPGs are often entirely different to the eight-melody template set out by *Ultima III* and *Dragon Quest*, yet for WRPGs, the model only needs partially expanding to meet the vast majority of games.

3.2.2 The Modern Age (PS3/Xbox 360/Wii Generation): 2005 Onwards

According to *Moby Games*, *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* (henceforth known just as *Oblivion*), was the very first CRPG released for Microsoft's *Xbox 360* console (and Windows) on March 20, 2006, five months after the console's launch. Just as its predecessors were; *Oblivion* was an open-world CRPG focused on allowing the player to visit anywhere in the world at any time (with some restrictions such as quest-dependant areas). Its narrative structure sees the game set on the same continent as its predecessors – Tamriel – but this time in the province of Cyrodiil. This area of the world is a far more traditional Western-inspired fantasy world; medieval cities and towns, with a focus on exploring a temperate environment of forests, rivers and plains with reference to fantastical gods and shrines. As with many WRPGs by this point, the player creates their character based on a broad choice of options including race, build, gender and other physical attributes. The plot revolves around the lineage of the Septims – the family of emperors who have ruled Tamriel for generations. The player is caught up in a series of events that sees the assassination of the current ruling Septim who – without an heir – leaves Tamriel weakened due to the Dragonfires going out upon his death. This then weakens the barrier between Tamriel and the demonic realm of Oblivion where multiple gates open and an invasion by the Daedra begins.

Like with *Morrowind*, the composer for *Oblivion* was Jeremy Soule. As with his previous scores for RPGs, Soule employs an orchestral timbre with very much the same kind of dynamic swells and fades that bring in and out of focus various motivic fragments – particularly during the exploration cues. According to the game files for the *Windows* version of the game, there are seven different types of sound files (although the official soundtrack gives names to each track rather than “Atmosphere 1” for example):

- Atmosphere
- Battle
- Dungeon
- Death
- Success
- Title
- Town

It is interesting to note the similarities to Chatman's components of a narrative in addition to Sugiyama's eight tracks for *Dragon Quest*. Let us first compare this to *Dragon Quest*; a game created twenty years earlier. The track types 'Dungeon', 'Battle' and 'Town' are identical, with 'Title' undoubtedly falling under the same use as 'Overture'. 'Atmosphere' is slightly different with Soule's use of it as more of an ambience or soundscape. 'Success' and 'Death' are what Winifred Phillips cites as a 'stinger' (Phillips, 2014, p. 177). If we link this to Chatman's model, 'Atmosphere', 'Dungeon' and 'Town' would undoubtedly be settings, 'Battle' an action, and 'Title', 'Death' and 'Success' as 'Happenings'. This will be discussed more in Chapters Four and Five. However, just as in *Dragon Quest*, note the absence of any character themes; something that JRPGs had moved towards by this point, but something that WRPGs were not incorporating.

Soule expands the orchestral palate here from *Morrowind* with a bigger role for woodwind which dominates the score during the "atmosphere" tracks with strings providing support that creates a distinctly pastoral pastiche. For the "battle" cues, brass and percussion are given prominence. The other cues fall in between these two extremes with the "dungeon" tracks being more ambient in nature thanks to the inclusion of various sound effects. As with *Morrowind*, the combined duration of these cues is surprisingly short for the reported 60 – 80 hours an average play-through takes,⁹⁰ totalling under an hour in length. That being said, there was far less criticism of this in *Oblivion* than for *Morrowind*, suggesting that the ambient nature of the "atmosphere" tracks and the lack of any thematic material in the "battle" tracks mitigated the recognisable repetition to a certain degree.

Whilst further information on *Oblivion* will be discussed in Chapter Five, *Oblivion* is arguably one of the quintessential WRPGs in many regards. It incorporated freedom of choice for the player narratively particularly through the use of its open-world. Its world-design – whilst clearly fantastical in setting – is grounded with the same sense of logic that had run through WRPGs with its quasi-medieval world that the vast majority of WRPGs were employing. Unlike many JRPGs, there is no incorporation of other fictional genres that would introduce items such as firearms or robots for example which would detract from this logic. Musically, much of what had been established by Hoenig for *Baldur's Gate* and Soule himself for *Icwind Dale* and *Neverwinter Nights*, is refined here: a Romantic orchestral palette combined with synth choir to voice a limited number of ambient cues for exploration and a series of energetic ones for combat. The ambient cues in particular will often seek to eliminate any sense of pulse, with either changes to metre or tempo, particularly during notes of a longer duration, or through ties over barlines. Fragments of melody will often come to the foreground, but they are deliberately not developed lest they draw the player's attention and disrupt the ambient nature.

⁹⁰ TRUEACHIEVEMENTS. (2020). Full List of Xbox Games with Achievements, *True Achievements*, [online]. Available at: <https://www.trueachievements.com/allgames.aspx> [Accessed August 2020].

The US developed CRPG *Titan Quest* was released on June 26, 2006 and had a narrative structure set in Ancient Greece, Egypt and China. The plot revolves around the player-controlled character which they create, aiming to defeat the Titans after they have escaped their imprisonment. Similar in play-style to *Diablo*, the enemy designs were inspired by the different regions and cultures that the plot led the player to. Scott Morton as composer and sound designer and Michael Verrette – Audio Director – were responsible for the audio in the game. In a development blog, Morton wrote:

We had to take several different historical cultures; extract musical elements from them; and try to combine all of those different elements into a cohesive whole that holds the score together, while still keeping each individual region unique in its sound (Morton, 2006).

Morton expanded on the music used in the game in an interview with *Gamespot* saying:

It's amazing how many games still use the "loop the music over and over" approach; we step beyond this boundary in *Titan Quest*. We have two different layers to our music system; on one side, we have ambient music, which is very flexible in nature and serves to set a character or mood for a specific area... We also have an event-oriented music system that will play music that has been written for specific locations or events in the game. These are unique pieces of music that help to identify key points in the story, or key locations that you have reached in your explorations (Morton, 2006b).

Notice that Morton does not reference characters at all in this statement, once again failing to meet one of Chatman's components of a narrative which is seen when it comes to cue placement where the game follows the expanded eight-melody model much more closely than JRPGs. *Titan Quest's* musical score was a clear and conscious decision by Morton to avoid what he saw as the pitfalls of the vast majority of JRPG scores and to some extent those of contemporary WRPG titles such as *Morrowind*. So different was Morton and Verrette's implementation that Axel Berndt and Knut Hartmann briefly touch upon it in their article on *The Functions of Music in Interactive Media* stating that '*Titan Quest* does even offer a slider to adjust how often music should be playing within the game' (Berndt/Hartmann, 2008). *Titan Quest* is another notable exception to the standard WRPG score design at this point, drawing particularly on other cultures stylistic and timbral features – similar to *Jade Empire*. Nevertheless, there is still a core-bedrock of an orchestral timbre and ambience which allows for the adaptive music that Morton identifies and in doing so, keeps a coherence that WRPG music has adhered to since *Diablo* and *Baldur's Gate*.

Another peculiar yet fascinating amalgamation of East and West within a JRPG is the tri-Crescendo developed game *Eternal Sonata* (known as *Torasuti Beru - Shopan no Yume*) in Japan released on June 14, 2007. The game's story is set within a lucid dream had by Frédéric Chopin in the final few hours of his life with just a few scenes in the real world as the player learns that Chopin is on his death-bed dying from tuberculosis. Almost all of the characters and places within the game are named after musical terms for example: the main female protagonist Polka, the Agogo Forest, the town of Ritardando, the fort of Fermata

and more. The story as a whole is divided into eight chapters, all themed around one of Chopin's compositions (for example Chapter 1 – "Raindrops") and related to events in his life. The composer was Motoi Sakuraba and Chopin's piano compositions within the game were performed by the Russian pianist Stanislav Bunin and upon the first section of the game's credits, both Bunin and Sakuraba's names are the first to appear (as shown in Fig. 3.6):

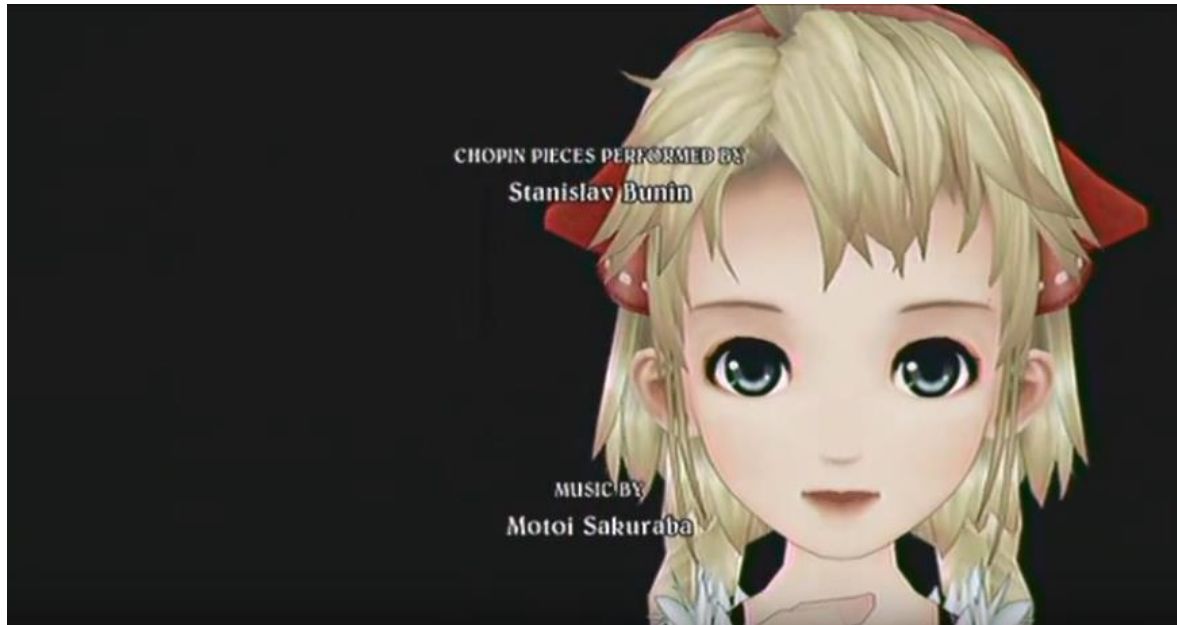


Fig. 3.6 – The beginning of the first section of the credits to *Eternal Sonata* listing the pianist (Stanislav Bunin) and composer (Motoi Sakuraba) first to showcase their significance

To showcase just how important Bunin and Sakuraba were regarded for the project, consider the statement Hiroya Hatsushiba – the director of the game – says in the liner notes for the OST:

Game music has basically been a construction implemented to foster scenes and it essentially has to take a secondary role. However, we promoted music from being in the secondary role to a leading character in this game, and everything was unified under the motive of 'music', even the design of petty things as well as the worldview and the story. Moreover, it is that gorgeous a game that Chopin makes his appearance in the game and his music is performed by Bunin (Hatsushiba, 2007).

Once again Sakuraba showcases a prolific array of tracks for the game with a four-CD length soundtrack. His style deviates from his previous work which he also acknowledges in the liner notes for the OST:

This game is the first one that does not have aggressive rock. I would be happy if you are aware of that and listen to the difference from my prior works (Sakuraba, 2007).

The score – a mix of recorded soloists and sampled orchestral sounds – is heavily centred upon the piano as was the case with almost all of Chopin's compositional output. A prime example is the final boss track "Scrap and Build Ourselves – from Revolution" which is a piece based upon sections of Chopin's "Revolutionary

Étude” (Op. 10, No. 12). This track plays throughout this final fight which helps Chopin come to terms with letting go of the imaginary dream-world he has created and in doing so, finally succumbing to the tuberculosis that will claim his life. The piano features in a central role yet not necessarily playing all of the material used from the original. Instead, the piano alternates in an almost concerto like way from playing the melody to decorating the orchestral version in a series of Romantic-style chromatic flourishes, heavy block chords and runs. Throughout the piece however – and with the rest of the score – Sakuraba avoids the use of heavy electric guitar, drum kit and bass synonymous with his *Tales* series scores and in doing so, offers an almost unique soundtrack within his repertoire.

Eternal Sonata continues the tradition of JRPGs mixing multiple narrative genres and in this game, bringing together Chopin’s piano music from the Romantic period of the western classical tradition together with an eclectic mix of various styles and timbral choices. Whilst there are typical environmental and combat cues, there are many cues that focus on the interplay of the emotions of hope and despair – similar in that regard to *Suikoden* – with cues such as ‘From Strength to Kindness’ or ‘Walk of the Heart’. This further reinforcing the argument outlined at the end of Chapter Two that the eight-melody model of *Dragon Quest* is no longer functional in JRPGs and a new template should be adopted.

The first in a series of games inspired by the novel series of the same name, *The Witcher* was developed by the Polish development studio CD Projekt Red and published by Atari for *Windows* on October 26, 2007. Once again, a typical “Hero’s Journey”, the narrative structure differs somewhat to other CRPGs. Whilst undeniably closer in tone to W RPGs, there are sufficient differences for *The Witcher* series as a whole to be classified as being outside the standard JRPG/W RPG divide. This is notable. For all of this history to date, there have only been games referenced as falling into one of these two categories. Yet whilst *The Witcher* is undoubtedly an (Action) CRPG, this marks a notable point in CRPG development history. For it shows that whilst this divide is still the most prominent in terms of CRPG design and decision making, internationally successful games that would draw critical, commercial and industry acclaim were starting to be developed.

The player takes control of Geralt of Rivia – a monster hunter known as a ‘Witcher’ thanks to having been genetically altered through mutagens and granted supernatural powers. This is in stark contrast to many of the other W RPGs discussed so far, where character creation – be it *Baldur’s Gate*, *Dungeon Siege* or *Oblivion* – are key to the style of the game. The play-style of Geralt is fixed; he wields one of two, two-handed swords (a steel one for humans and a silver one for monsters) and can use weak spells known as signs. This is again more like JRPGs; often a character has their own weapon set that does not alter for example, Sora’s keyblade in *Kingdom Hearts* or Cid’s spear in *Final Fantasy VII*. However, whilst the game’s plot is set in a homogenous European-style medieval fantasy world as many W RPGs are, it uses folklore based on Eastern-European mythology rather than the stereotypical Tolkienesque mythology found in other Western games. Elves are downtrodden, second-class citizens and monsters such as ghouls, wyverns, kikimora and ifrit roam the world.

Because of this, the plot of *The Witcher* is one of the most important elements of the game; made especially so thanks to the game's system of moral choices and ambiguous morality to many of the quest lines.

As such, it is probably not surprising that the music for the game would also be different, featuring noticeable elements of Eastern European music within it as well as other European cultures such as Irish music. Composed and arranged by Pawel Blaszcak and Adam Skorupa, the score features a combination of synth-based instruments and recorded ones. Of *The Witcher's* general atmosphere, both men state ethno-musical influences including music of Eastern Europe and Celtic folk music (Blaszcak, 2012). Skorupa states 'Dark folk/medieval music is something I've loved composing, since the times of the first *The Witcher* game' (Skorupa, 2017). Here we see a unique cultural-heritage that none of the above CRPGs have explored; both composers draw from their country's own folk music and bring elements of neighbouring European countries into the mix as well. This also reflects on the game's narrative structure; the setting sees a lot of Slavic and Irish mythology used within it. The score as a whole is notable for being more thematic than ambient (Gann, 2008b) which is in contrast to scores by Soule for instance. Recorded male and female vocals are used within the score singing either wordlessly or in a European-based language conceived by the author of the books Andrzej Sapkowski. The music also does not contain any character themes, making it different from JRPGs. Instead, like WRPGs, only three out of the four components of Chatman's narrative theory are incorporated. Critically, the game won "Best Fantasy Game Soundtrack" for the 2007 Radio Rivendell Fantasy Awards.

The first in a series of dark fantasy Action-RPGs created by Hidetaka Miyazaki, *Demon's Souls* would begin a play-style and format of Action-RPG by the developer FromSoftware that would become synonymous with its unforgiving difficulty, its abstract narrative style, exaggerated boss fights and dramatic music. Released in Japan for the *PlayStation 3* on February 5, 2009, the game's setting is in the fictional kingdom of Boletaria. This kingdom was attacked in ancient times by the "Old One" – a powerful demon – who decried the forbidden use of Soul Art magic and in retribution created a mist known as "Deep Fog" that contained soul-eating demons to consume the world and wipe out humanity. Whilst the "Old One" was eventually lulled to sleep which saved Boletaria the current king has begun using Soul Art magic once more and the "Old One" has reawakened to finally destroy the last bastion of humanity. It is as an unnamed soldier of the king's army that the player plays as, beginning the game by walking into the mist and dying.

The music for the project was written and arranged by Shunsuke Kida and featured a recorded chamber orchestra, choir and soprano soloist with the addition of organ for the cues⁹¹ "The Nexus", harpsichord for "Old Hero" and piano for "One Who Craves Souls". Interestingly, when viewing the game's credits, there is no flute within the woodwind family; instead a second oboist is used instead. This perhaps also reflects on

⁹¹ As named in the OST.

the notable role the soprano singer (performed in the score by Akiko Yoshida, credited as Kokia) has within the score and the similar pitch range the flute and soprano have.

The game has a distinctly gothic feel to its architecture and setting with a significant amount of religious symbolism incorporated within it. Whilst the music is not historically representative of the period, it creates an idea of an historical past due to the variety of Baroque style elements to it. Additionally, it contains a pipe organ for its religious connotations – something van Elferen suggests is both associated with Gothic and Catholicism and serves as ‘an uncanny remainder and audible reminder of Catholic superstition, irrationality and ritual’ (Van Elferen, 2012, p. 38).⁹²

For its historical referencing – even if not accurate to the Gothic period – one such piece to make use of this is “The Beginning”. The score is shown below in Fig. 3.7 and heard in [audio track 3.04](#):

⁹² Julie Brown (2010) and Karen Cook (2019) also discuss the pipe organ’s role in both horror and the Gothic within film and games respectively.

Slowly (♩=63)

Tuba
 Violin I
 Violin II
 Viola
 Violoncello
 Contrabass

6

Tba.
 Vln. I
 Vln. II
 Vla.
 Vc.
 Cb.

11

Tba.
 Vln. I
 Vln. II
 Vla.
 Vc.
 Cb.

Fig. 3.7 – Transcription of “The Beginning” from *Demon’s Souls* by Shunsuke Kida.

Notice the introduction's similarity to Vivaldi's "Winter" in both its arrangement for string-orchestra along with its slow rate of harmonic change. The tuba does provide a difference in timbre than found in the period, but it is used relatively scarcely in comparison to the other timbres that it creates more of a historical ideal, rather than a completely accurate portrayal. The tuba aside however, this predominantly string-orchestra timbral influence is drawn from scores such as Bernard Hermann's *Psycho* (dir. Hitchcock, 1960) with prominent dissonance created purely by the homogenised sounds of the strings. Music is used sparingly within the *Souls* series and *Demon's Souls* is no exception – in fact, the use of music in this game is one of only a few ways that designers employ music within CRPGs. Its implementation sees music used mainly in boss fights leaving getting from one to another making use of ambient sound effects alone. This deliberate design creates a feeling of isolation that the series is synonymous with. Silence is not just used by only using the music in certain places; the score itself has several tracks where silence is used for dramatic effect, most notably in "Maiden in Black" where between each chord is six beats of silence.

Demon's Souls is a curious CRPG and one that defies pigeonholing into either of the two main stylistic subgenres of JRPGs or WRPGs. It is a game made in Japan, with an almost exclusively Japanese development team. Yet, this is a game whose architecture and setting are decidedly Western Gothic. Kida's choice of timbre is reminiscent of WRPGs with its exclusively orchestral sound palate along with choir and the aforementioned organ. Yet the sound cues are only found in boss fights, eliminating comparisons to every other CRPG listed so far. If anything, there is perhaps an argument to be made that there is some merit to the term "Souls-Like"⁹³ as a ludic sub-genre of the CRPG that defies convention and as a consequence must be acknowledged as game style by itself.

The composer Israeli-American composer Inon Zur is arguably second only to Jeremy Soule in terms of his output for award-winning WRPGs. Since 2001 when he co-wrote the music for *Fallout Tactics: Brotherhood of Steel*, Zur has scored multiple CRPGs, including *Icewind Dale II* in 2002 to which the music to the original was composed by Jeremy Soule. In 2008, BioWare's *Dragon Age: Origins* was released on November 3. The game was described by BioWare as a spiritual successor to their previous games of *Baldur's Gate* and *Neverwinter Nights* franchises (Page, 2009), played in a top-down perspective with a multi-character party led by the player-controlled and created avatar. The game is a dark, fantasy-stylised game, consisting of Tolkien-esque fantastical elements such as elves, dwarves, humans amongst others. However, writer David Gaider sought to differentiate it from the *Dungeons & Dragons* CRPGs that Bioware had created previously by incorporating additional elements such as the demonic race known as the Darkspawn who dwell in the Deep Roads – a series of deep underground tunnels once created and used by the dwarves, but now off limits. The one order that stands against them are known as the Grey Wardens which is what the player plays as – though the race, sex and attributes are customisable by the player. Set in Ferelden – a country in the

⁹³ Wagar, C. (2020). What is "Souls-Like"? *Critpoints*, [online]. Available at: <https://critpoints.net/2020/03/11/what-is-souls-like/> [Accessed August 2020].

fictional world of Thedas – the Grey Warden must lead the fight back against the Darkspawn that have risen from the Deep Roads and end the blight. Each piece of the soundtrack Zur created was recorded twice by a 44-piece orchestra before the recordings were merged together to sound like a much bigger orchestra (Reiner, 2010). According to Zur, the orchestral palate made heavy use of ‘low brass playing along with ancient drums and low stringed instruments’ creates a sound that was somewhere ‘between heroic to demonic’ (Zur, 2011). Here, we once again see a mainly homogenised Western-timbre although Zur’s choice of woodwind typically revolves around the shakuhachi giving these moments where it enters a slightly exotic sound. He states in a different interview that ‘the style of the game and the world it resides in will be the biggest factor when it comes to the initial musical approach’ (Zur, 2017) which from what has been outlined so far immediately showcases a different approach to the JRPG scores where the stylistic genre of the score is not as bound to the setting. Although less melodic than many JRPG scores, Zur’s writing is more thematic than composers such as Soule which can occasionally lead to repetition fatigue; Daniel Ran (2012) for instance, notes the combat theme as an example of a melody repeated too often for the number of times that it is heard.⁹⁴ Zur states that he has composed just ‘six to seven’ themes but aimed to make the score cohesive by ‘weaving’ the main theme underneath the rest of the score constantly; either through its melody, harmony or rhythm (Zur, 2009). This is particularly interesting, as these themes are treated as leitmotifs for the variety of factions in the game including the dwarves, elves, mages in a similar way to Shore did for the different races in *The Lord of the Rings*. Whilst there are several songs in the score (the cues ‘Dragon Age: Origins’, ‘I Am the One’ and ‘Leliana’s Song’) Zur tends to employ wordless female vocals⁹⁵ to provide a contrasting – and arguably ethereal – timbre to the horns and strings that dominate the rest of the score. In this way, it is again similar to Shore’s score for *The Lord of the Rings* that used high vocal timbres – either a treble boy or soprano female voice – to typically represent the mysticism of the elves.

Stylistically, Zur’s use of both melody and harmony is slightly more chromatic than Soule’s, making use of parallel triads that pull the tonality just slightly from the stereotypical major/minor tonality that grounds much of the ambience heard. This chromaticism often leads to unexpected false-relations that underpin the slight differences to the stylistic norms heard in many WRPGs to date. Zur uses these across the cues for the game creating a sense of stylistic coherency based around this slightly exotic flavour to his score. Take for example the ‘Ruins of Ostagar’ shown in Fig. 3.8 ([audio track 3.05](#)), heard as a cue in the game when the player’s party returns to the site of humanity’s defeat in the game’s opening chapters. This cue encompasses the main theme throughout its duration, reharmonising and orchestrating it and played at a slower tempo to represent a mournful tone. Here, Zur shows the slight use of chromaticism both melodically and harmonically that just nudges this as a stylistic choice that separates the *Dragon Age* ‘sound’ to that of *The Elder Scrolls* for instance. Whilst timbrally, this is distinctly a WRPG cue, the thematic writing in comparison

⁹⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the themes and variations used by Zur in the score, Ran’s blog gives further information to the music used for both *Dragon Age: Origins* and *Dragon Age II*.

⁹⁵ Provided by Aubrey Ashburn.

to Hoenig's bandit camp cue for instance is particularly noticeable and leaves *Dragon Age* as a notable WRPG example in our timeline.

Fig. 3.8 – Reduction of ‘Ruins of Ostagar’ from *Dragon Age: Origins* by Inon Zur, showcasing a decidedly thematic cue with distinct moments of chromaticism both melodically and harmonically.

Dragon Age: Origins' musical score is ultimately an extension of the typical WRPG that exists by this point. Whilst cue titles suggest that there are ‘race’ themes rather than character themes, they are heard more as *area* themes rather than being related to a character per se, and as such, the score follows the vast majority of WRPGs by not employing the character component of Chatman’s narrative theory. Instead, it is an extension of the eight-melody model, containing all of the cues found within and then additional ones such as spiritual locations and taverns.

Keeping with the fantasy and sci-fi blend found in the narrative of *Final Fantasy VII* and *VIII*, Square Enix released *Final Fantasy XIII* on December 17, 2009 for *PlayStation 3* – the first iteration of the franchise for this console generation and the first of the *Final Fantasy XIII* trilogy. Set between the floating world of Cocoon and Pulse (the world below), the game’s plot follows the principal protagonist Lightning as she sets out to battle the government and save her sister from a god-like being. As with all *Final Fantasy* games, more playable characters are introduced as the story progresses; each with their own back-stories and motivations for why they are fighting and what they are hoping to achieve. The game’s composer was Masashi Hamauzu whose previous work had seen him work with Nobuo Uematsu and Junya Nakano for *Final Fantasy X* (see

above) in addition to being the main composer for the spin-off *Final Fantasy* game *Dirge of Cerberus: Final Fantasy VII*. Whilst the majority of the score was synthesised, several tracks were orchestrated and performed by the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra in addition to a Japanese session orchestra. Vocals were employed within certain tracks in a variety of languages including English, Ainu and fictitious languages (Mina, 2011).

For the game, Hamauzu reveals a specific inspiration, stating:

As I was a kid, I would listen to so much anime music which I felt was very effective and beautiful. I think that has a lot to do with it. FFXIII has a lot of different sounds and formats for its music, so I used the motifs in a lot of places to have consistency (Hamauzu, 2010).

It is interesting to see Hamauzu's acknowledgement of the influence that one Japanese cultural soundscape has had in his work for another, particularly as the score design for anime – like with J-Pop – often draws on the music of other cultures; something that will be discussed further in Chapter Four. He states in the same interview of his desire to create an 'interesting harmonic' language in his scores. This somewhat ambiguous statement is shown across the vast majority of cues with a multitude of extended and altered chords in place of standard triads. Take for example, the opening string ostinato to the battle theme shown in Fig. 3.9 ([audio track 3.06](#)) which is heard across much of the cue underpinning the melody:



Fig. 3.9 – Piano reduction of the string ostinato that underpins much of the battle theme ('Blinded by Light') in *Final Fantasy XIII* by Masashi Hamauzu showcasing the 'interesting harmonic language' he describes.

Like with Uematsu, Hamauzu created many leitmotifs for the game – particularly with regards to the characters, but also the various locations that Lightning and her party might have to keep returning to. As with *Final Fantasy VII* for example, these leitmotifs weave in and out of the game and despite the multitude of timbral differences and styles that Hamauzu's score contains, by referring to these motifs, the game's narrative achieves coherency with the music. Take for example the character Lightning's main motif. This is built around much of the musical material featured in 'Blinded by Light' and as much of the story is built around this character, the correlation with her drive to defeat her enemies throughout the narrative as a whole is achieved. Lightning's character theme is not the only one – each of the game's six playable characters – Lightning, Snow, Vanille, Sazh, Hope and Fang – has an associated character theme, which adapts to the

narrative. For instance, Fang's theme intertwines with Lightning's theme as she and the game's principal protagonist become closer – despite starting as enemies.

Final Fantasy XIII builds upon the work of its immediate predecessor – *Final Fantasy XII* and the score design created by Hitoshi Sakimoto – as well as the music by Nobuo Uematsu and as such, it can be argued as being the start of the modern *Final Fantasy* score. It inherits several features of its predecessors: the chocobo theme is one example as is the huge variety of styles and timbral choices heard since *Final Fantasy V*. Like with *Final Fantasy XII* it uses much more realistic samples and recordings than those earlier games. Yet, in contrast to *Final Fantasy XII*, Hamauzu's use of extended and altered chords – often heard on the piano within the game – creates a harmonic language that is far more dissonant and varied than what had come before. The vast array of character themes heard in the game again showcase the divide between WRPG and JRPG cue-types and once more suggest the need for a new template model.

In 2010, the game *Ni no Kuni: Shikkoku no Madoushi* (*Ni no Kuni: Dominion of the Dark Djinn*⁹⁶ for the international release and henceforth described just as *Ni no Kuni*) was released in Japan for the Nintendo DS. As a collaboration between the publisher/developer Level-5 and the renowned Japanese animation studio Studio Ghibli who created the game's animated scenes, *Ni no Kuni* is one of the most recognisable hybrids of anime and CRPG – as shown in Fig. 3.10. The narrative structure sees the game set between two worlds – a fictional town set in Japan – and a fantasy world. The plot involves a young boy named Oliver who loses his mother after she saves him from drowning. Distraught, he cries which creates a doll – a gift from his mother – to come to life as a fairy named Shizuku (or Drippy in the English version). Managing to cross over into the magical world – which narratively is similar to Western fantasy worlds – Oliver finds that it has been subjugated by an evil wizard known as Jabou. The story continues to see Oliver attempt to defeat the evil wizard in order to set the citizens of this world free.



Fig. 3.10 – The Studio Ghibli animated art-style found in the Japanese release of *Ni no Kuni: Dominion of the Dark Djinn* for the Nintendo DS.

⁹⁶ A later re-release for the PlayStation 3 titled *Ni no Kuni: Wrath of the White Witch* was an expanded version of the game.

The music for the game was primarily written by Joe Hisaishi – one of Japan’s most successful composers and long-time composer for many of Studio Ghibli’s animated feature films with assistance from Rei Kondoh. The score brought Hisaishi’s Neo-Romantic orchestral style to the project and featured a fully recorded score conducted by Hisaishi and performed by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition to the orchestral palate Hisaishi used, there are several other influences he incorporated including the traditional folk music of Ireland (Hisaishi, 2013) and additional instruments such as lute, sitar and tabla báyáñ. As such, timbrally, the score sits much more towards a WRPG sound palate with a focus on the orchestral with hints of ethnic instruments incorporated throughout. Stylistically however, it has much more in common with JRPGs with a focus on distinct and memorable melodies. Indeed, comparisons by commentators on the game have made comparisons with Koichi Sugiyama’s work for the *Dragon Quest* due to its more traditional sense of Western timbre and the compositional style (Gann, 2011b).

Hisaishi wrote 21 cues for the DS release within the span of a week, writing them as piano sketches before he commenced on orchestrating them. These included many staples that had existed since *Ultima III* and *Dragon Quest* including a main theme, battle themes, a castle theme, a labyrinthine dungeon, a final boss and an ending song. Yet, there are a multitude more including a theme for ‘Drippy’ – the fairy – which once again showcases a JRPG score adhering to all four components of a narrative according to Chatman. Criticism by game-review websites such as Eurogamer and Kokatu was directed at the repetitiveness of some of the game’s music – particularly the battle theme for which Hisaishi only wrote one track and due to how often this cue would be repeated, there is perhaps merit to their arguments. As usual with JRPGs, a theme song for the game was created with lyrics by Mamiko Suzuki, music by Hisaishi and was performed by his daughter Mai Fujisawa for the Japanese version and the chorister Archie Buchanan for the English release.

Ni no Kuni sits as a distinctly notable game within the history of CRPGs. It is a fusion of two of Japan’s most prominent cultural media exports: anime and video games. The narrative is a fusion of the child-protagonist stories told in multiple Studio Ghibli films such as *Howl’s Moving Castle* (dir. Miyazaki, 2004), *Ponyo* (dir. Miyazaki, 2008) and *Spirited Away* (dir. Miyazaki, 2001) and the young-person led JRPGs such as *Pokémon* or *Kingdom Hearts*. Hisaishi’s score is an attempt to merge the compositional style heard in these Studio Ghibli led films with the mechanics of the CRPG ludic genre. The game draws on the cultural heritage of many previous pieces of Japanese media and yet through this orchestral-timbre, Hisaishi’s score is limited in its compositional style. What had been the norm for over a decade with a vast array of instruments and corresponding musical styles such as the electric guitar and rock or the saxophone and jazz, is replaced by a far more traditional film-orientated sound-palate. Certainly, it captures the melodious elements that many JRPG cues have, yet this is a throwback to yesteryear CRPGs fitting the eight-melody model much more than many of the JRPGs listed so far.

The Last Story was developed exclusively for the *Wii* by the Japanese development studios Mistwalker and AQ Interactive and released on January 27, 2011. Taking place on the seaborne fortress of Lazulis, the

arching plot sees the world around it decaying by an unknown force and the main character Zael's mission to stop the planet's death. Hironobu Sakaguchi – the director of the original *Final Fantasy* games – directed the game and co-wrote the plot for it although Takuya Matsumoto and Tsukasa – the designers of the game had arguably just as much influence, as did the Japanese publisher of the game Nintendo which pushed to have the game's narrative structure changed from a science-fiction setting to a fantasy one (Sakaguchi, 2012). The goal was to make a game where a player could play it – at least from a combat perspective – in the way that they wished; a trait more akin to Western games (Iwata, 2011). These Western influences did not stop there; Matsumoto explained to Satoru Iwata in an interview that when living in the United Kingdom for a year, he would visit castles and abbeys and that the brochures he collected 'ended up being used for the level design in Last Story' (Matsumoto, 2011). Additionally, *Gamasutra* suggests in an interview with Matsumoto that 'unlike most JRPGs, which are still broken up into discrete story and gameplay segments, The Last Story has on-the-fly character dialogue during its dungeons, which keeps the game's pace quick and helps develop its cast' (Nutt, 2012) that is reminiscent of Western games like Bioware's *Dragon Age* series and Naughty Dog's *Uncharted* series.

For the music, Sakaguchi approached Nobuo Uematsu once more with arrangements by Yoshitaka Suzuki and Tsutomu Narita. Commentators of the score suggest that 'the composer took the score for The Last Story in a much more Hollywood-inspired direction' (Friedman, 2012). From the game's end credits recorded instruments include vocals, electric guitar, violin, percussion, flute, saxophone and Irish bouzouki as well as the synthesized elements included within the score. The score⁹⁷ like with many JRPGs is stylistically eclectic including big-band jazz ('Being Congenial'), a flamenco-inspired combat track ('Bout of Arena – Battle Banquet'), prog-rock ('Dance of Death'), European-folk ('The Pub') and the religious chanting at the beginning of "The One Who Rules Us All" all serve as examples of the range of inspirations Uematsu draws upon, as well as more expected orchestral pieces. As with *Ni no Kuni*, the return to the western quasi-medieval setting means that this is another JRPG whose musical score fits the eight-melody model of *Dragon Quest* compared to other JRPGs and interestingly, this game does not feature any character themes.

Uematsu also composed the game's theme song titled "Toberu Mono" which had lyrics written by Sakaguchi and was sung by the Japanese singer Kanon. Of the lyrics, Sakaguchi writes; '[t]here's a lot of sentimental value attached to it since I wrote the lyrics, and it also voices the "foreignness" that the game has' (Sakaguchi, 2012). Interestingly, Uematsu suggests that for video game music to develop in the future, games would require an audio director. He states:

⁹⁷ As with previous games, the cue names are based on the OST.

I mean someone whose role is to oversee the whole process, from ambient sounds to the way the music is used, and how precisely it sounds. I think this is a role that may well be required in video games in the future (Uematsu, 2012).

This however, is what many WRPGs had had for some time – most notably *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* which was released a year before this interview – suggesting Uematsu was unaware of this fact. As such, it is reasonable to suggest that for Japanese studios, their audio model for games was somewhat different to Western studios at the time.

Before talking about *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* however, another WRPG must be discussed. The American indie⁹⁸ developer Supergiant Games developed the Action-RPG *Bastion*, which was published by Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment on July 20, 2011 for Xbox 360s “Live Arcade” – a digital only platform for the console. The narrative structure of the game involves a setting of a fantasy world centred round the city of Caelondia after a cataclysmic event has fractured it and the surrounding area into floating chunks. The player plays as “Kid” – a silent protagonist who aims to get to the titular bastion where there is a rumour that it has the power to reverse the aforementioned calamity. The music for the game was created by Darren Korb, a composer, songwriter and childhood friend of the director Amir Rao. According to Korb, the team decided it needed a ‘gritty-like frontier feel and tone’ and that he did not want the music to be like anything he had heard before in games which he perceived to be either hard rock, orchestral or a combination of both (Korb, 2012). As such, he wanted it to be ‘eclectic – familiar yet strange’ and as such, he ended up creating a genre that he called ‘acoustic frontier trip-hop’. This, he expands as:

Essentially, I made a constraint for myself that would sort of tie all of the music together, and I figured if I made all the music within a genre, it would accomplish that. Each part of that represents the musical element of the game. There are acoustic elements to ground it, and this weird kinda triphop rhythm section to give it a little bit of a modern spin, and then the frontier aspect of it is represented by both the guitar as well as some exotic instruments that are not familiar to American ears (Korb, 2015).

Whilst there are clear forms of Western music that form Korb’s influence for the game this is not the traditional WRPG orchestral influence. Instead, it is Western pop culture and the music found therein. This is a notable exception from the norm of WRPGs and aligns the game’s musical score much more with JRPGs and their non-homogenised choices of style or timbre. In addition to the elements he describes above, he also lists ‘Led Zeppelin’s more acoustic music to old southern spirituals and a bunch of stuff in between’ (Korb, 2017) as well as inspiration to how the music was incorporated from WRPGs such as Uematsu’s score for *Diablo II* (Korb, 2013). Korb’s rejection of typical fantasy-esque orchestral scores relates to that of

⁹⁸ Independent – i.e. not attached to a specific publisher or being backed by investors or other venture capital companies. They are typically made up of a small development team.

Uematsu's thinking between *Final Fantasy IV* and *V* and reinforces the parallels to JRPG score design made above. One additional point of note should be stated with regards to Korb's treatment of his score once the game had been finished – similar to Ben Houge's score for *Arcanum: Of Steamworks and Magick Obscura*, Korb created a PDF containing eight pieces of sheet music for guitar and piano which could be downloaded for free from the Supergiant Games website⁹⁹ – which whilst not unique (as stated above), is unusual for WRPGs and arguably part of the independent nature of Supergiant Games as a developer. The unique setting of *Bastion*, ultimately leads to the argument that this is an anomaly within WRPGs in so far that the musical score does not fit easily into the eight-melody model, but nor does it feature any character themes that are commonplace within JRPGs. Instead, this is a musical score unique in style, timbre and cue placement.

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim (henceforth known as *Skyrim*) is to date the world's second highest-selling CRPG title after *Pokémon Red/Green/Blue/Yellow* (Sirani, 2020). Released on November 11, 2011, the game continues with the narrative and ludic template established in its predecessors; a large open-world game where the player creates a customisable character, begins the game as a prisoner before going on to explore the world and defeat the evil enemy that is causing chaos throughout the land. For this game, the narrative structure sees the plot set in the snowy, Viking-inspired northern Tamriel province of Skyrim, 200 years after the events of *Oblivion*. Alduin the World Eater – a dragon – is prophesised to destroy the world and only the "Dragonborn" – a title and unique abilities inherited by the player character can stop him.

The setting of the game in this quasi-medieval Scandanavian-inspired land is arguably one of the most important factors surrounding many aspects of the game's design including its musical score. Once more, Jeremy Soule was the composer for the game and its three expansions *Dawnguard*, *Hearthfire* and *Dragonborn*. This was to be a huge increase in the amount of music used within an *Elder Scrolls* game; including the "atmospheres" track which combined ambient sounds with minimal musical accompaniment. Almost every part of *Skyrim*'s score refers back to the setting that Skyrim inhabits and indeed Mark Sweeney suggests that 'landscape is in the minds of the majority of players, if not at all times' (Sweeney, 2014, p. 169). This is a powerful statement and reinforces that for *The Elder Scrolls* games, the notion of a sandbox – an area where the player can do (almost) what they want – is at the forefront of all game elements.

In an interview, Mark Lampert – audio director – states, 'Jeremy Soule; his work on the main theme of the game set the tone for the rest of it' (Lampert, 2011, 00:02:16). Game director Todd Howard adds; 'I had this idea that the music for *Skyrim* would be the *Elder Scrolls* theme but sung by a barbarian choir... they're singing this song in the dragon language to the theme of *Elder Scrolls*' (Howard, 2011, 00:01:10). The choir used in the main theme¹⁰⁰ consisted of 'thirty people recorded multiple times' (Lampert, 2011b, 00:03:16) to give

⁹⁹ SUPERGIANT GAMES. (N.D.) Bastion Sheet Music. *SuperGiant Games*, [online]. Available at: <https://store.supergiantgames.com/products/bastion-original-sheet-music> [Accessed August 2020].

¹⁰⁰ As with each of the main series games since *Morrowind*, Soule creates a variation of the theme he wrote for that, presenting it in a stylistically different way here. Sweeney (2014, p. 192) presents a transcription of each of these,

this barbarian feel Howard requested which in addition to singing were also required to perform shouts at multiple points in the piece. Brendan Lamb and Barnabas Smith also highlight the importance of this main theme's sound to greater narrative structure:

Soule's music often reinforces the idea of the Nordic/European mediaeval period that is visually present. By employing a variety of techniques ranging from orchestration, the use of acoustic and folk instruments such as harp and drums, and Renaissance compositional techniques, Soule's compositions provide a strong aural support for the diverse soundscape for *Skyrim* (Lamb & Smith, 2018).

Similarly, to what Zur did with *Dragon Age*, Soule gives multiple important areas of the game thematic cues to sonically link the player with these areas. In *Skyrim*, rather than represent the powerful factions that Zur had done, each city has its own theme (Adams, 2019). This and the multiple exploration tracks and variations in battle tracks meant that *Skyrim* did not suffer as much from the repetition fatigue that *Morrowind* and *Oblivion* had done although Sweeney notes that despite this, due to the lack of synchronising action to music, cues still become more generic and repetitive (Sweeney, 2014, p. 168). Just as *Oblivion* had done, the game files for the Windows version of the game gives a type to all of the music files used in the game. They are not all the same as *Oblivion* however:

- Combat
- Dread
- Dungeon
- Explore
- Other
- Special
- Tavern
- Town

With these implementation titles, we can once again return to Chatman's narrative components and it is apparent that Soule's naming in comparison to *Oblivion* matches further. 'Dungeon', 'Explore', 'Tavern' and 'Town' – these are all music to accompany settings. 'Combat' remains consistent with action. 'Special' incorporates the main theme which is a happening though to this I argue 'dread' can also be included for an action must have occurred to cause the dread to happen. Finally, the 'other': these happen during one-off events, for example discovering High Hrothgar for the first time. Again, no character themes are heard; the

although I strongly dispute the *Oblivion* transcription as not being the correct 'main theme'. A transcription of what I believe to be correct is presented in **Appendix 2.11**. Importantly, the proposed correct transcription supports Sweeney's argument further.

closest is the named goddess Kyne, however, this is played as more of a spiritual area track as its name suggest; 'Kyne's Peace'.

The longevity¹⁰¹ of *Skyrim* in addition to its commercial success continues Soule's dominance of the fantasy WRPG musical style. His inclusion of more melodic material – particularly in the individual themes for the different towns – is notable in so far as it pushes his writing back somewhat towards the melody-dominated JRPG score. However, this is only slightly. The WRPG style both timbrally and stylistically continues very much unabated since *Baldur's Gate* with Soule drawing upon other Western composers such as Tchaikovsky and Grieg as inspiration for several tracks (Sweeney, 2014, p. 195 & 205). Whilst it is undeniably true that sample-technology, the recording of orchestras and implementation has advanced, this style – arguably reaching its pinnacle with *Skyrim* – is the model of coherency that the vast majority of WRPGs aim to emulate.

The Action-RPG *Dragon's Dogma* was released for *PlayStation 3*, *Xbox 360* and *Windows* on May 22, 2012. Its inclusion in this chapter is due to its difference from most other JRPGs listed (including *Last Story*); both from a musical perspective and a variety of other game elements. *Dragon's Dogma* is as much an outlier from the quintessential JRPG as *Jade Empire* was to the WRPG and although has a "Hero's Journey" narrative the game's narrative structure has the game set in the high fantasy world of Gransys, designed in game to be open-world and taking inspiration from various WRPGs such as *Oblivion* and *Fable II* (Famitsu, 2013). Director Hideaki Itsuno cited influences 'ranging from the *Lord of the Rings* books and *Dungeons & Dragons* to *The Neverending Story*, and claims, "I think the language and imagery of fantasy are pretty much understood around the world. It has a universal appeal"' (Hayward, 2011). Musical director and composer Tadayoshi Makino stated in an interview with Chris Greening that the initial concept for the musical style of the game by the producer and director was to be jazz and hard rock which he felt were 'far detached from the fantasy genre' (Makino, 2016). He continues by saying that he resisted this for the most part as he wanted to create a score that was 'carefully balanced with the game's world' and wanting to partially emulate the Western film composers Howard Shore and James Horner (Makino, 2012). This proposed musical style is important. It suggests that the diverse nature of fusing multiple styles into a coherent whole is expected by the design team including the director and producer – in stark contrast to the assumed traditional and homogenous orchestral timbre and style in terms of WRPG musical score design.

Makino made use of three other composers when creating the score – Rei Kondoh, Masayoshi Ishi and the Western composer Inon Zur brought in due him having a 'unique composition method that Japanese people do not have' (Makino, 2012b). The score was recorded by the Sofia Film Orchestra in Bulgaria; recorded there as Makino wished for a European – rather than a 'Hollywood' sound (ibid). Aubrey Ashburn was also brought on board to sing some of the solo soprano lines due to her work with Zur on *Dragon Age*. Rock elements

¹⁰¹ This is particularly true of the Windows version of the game with multiple mods still in development including – as of 2020 – an almost unprecedented complete fan-made version of *Morrowind* in the *Skyrim* engine named *Skywind* which boasts a fan development team numbering in the hundreds.

were used however, recorded by guitarist Tenyu Nakamura and drummer Tatsuya Suzuki (Makino, 2012) as the team went out of their way to record as many live performers as possible rather than relying on computer software (ibid). The score – although containing rich orchestration – is deliberately ambient:

The original concept for the music of *Dragon's Dogma* was music that the listener could physically feel, such as the rush of the winds and the pull of the tides, but I took care to not make each piece too assertive... I thought by using the smaller pieces as accents, I would be able to make the all-important main theme that much memorable (Makino, 2012c).

As such, this score falls much closer to WRPGs such as *Morrowind* and Zur's own *Dragon Age* soundtracks in this sense. So too, is the use of a quasi-medieval setting and in doing so allows for a musical score that is again much closer to the eight-melody model than other Japanese CRPGs; particularly those of only a decade prior to this.

The *Nintendo DS* game *Bravely Default: Flying Fairy*¹⁰² (henceforth referred to as *Bravely Default*) was created by the Japanese development studio Silicon Studio and published by Square Enix on October 11, 2012. This game stands in stark contrast to *Dragon's Dogma* as the development team admitted on their official Twitter account; 'Bravely Default is a game that was designed only taking RPG fans in Japan into consideration' (Ishaan, 2013). Originally designed to be a sequel to the *Final Fantasy* spin-off game *Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light* (Brown, 2014), *Bravely Default* became a game in its own right whilst featuring various elements from the *Final Fantasy* series. As such, it has a very similar narrative and narrative structure to the original *Final Fantasy* games, with the game set in the world of Luxendarc – a fantasy world kept in balance by four elemental crystals. The crystals are protected by the "Crystal Orthodoxy" – a worldwide religion that venerates them. Over the course of the plot of the game, the player-controlled character – a young shepherd named Tiz Arrior – must band together with a variety of colourful characters to restore the crystals after they are consumed by darkness. To do so they must travel across different worlds and locales learning more about what consumed the crystals, the Crystal Orthodoxy and aspects about themselves.

The score for the game was composed by the artist known professionally as Revo – leader of the band "Sound Horizon". Whilst the score was originally meant to have between 20 and 30 unique cues, Revo ultimately composed nearly double that as he felt the game and its environments needed the extra musical accompaniment (Revo, 2012). He talks about the desire to write in a somewhat nostalgic style – reminiscent of older *Final Fantasy*, *Dragon Quest* and *SaGa* titles – with lyrical melodies in a variety of different musical styles. The end credits to the game reveal a host of different timbres including solo vocals, guitar, mandolin, bouzouki, electric organ, harpsichord, piano, and drums. For the orchestral palate, the "Gen Ittetsu String Orchestra" were employed along with the "Eric Miyashiro Team" and "Masanori Suzuki" brass ensembles

¹⁰² The original game was a Japanese exclusive. An updated version of the game was released internationally titled *Bravely Default: For the Sequel*.

and the “Hideyo Takakuwa Woodwind Ensemble” which consisted of flute, shinobue, tin whistle, recorder, oboe, clarinet and bassoon. Other instruments include harp, saxophone, accordion and both adult and child choirs. From a stylistic perspective, in addition to the expected orchestral stylistic tendencies associated with the genre, there are music-box pieces (‘Instant of Eternity’), rock elements (the latter part of ‘Beyond that Prayer’), folk-style instrumental pieces (‘Beneath the Hollow Moon’) and the piano led nostalgic ‘A World Where Blossoms Fall’ due to it referring to earlier CRPG musical traditions. These examples are all cues to accompany the various settings that the player will visit throughout the game. For the combat music, multiple battle cues were composed to reduce the likelihood of repetition fatigue – in contrast to *Ni no Kuni* for instance – and were written with different degrees of intensity depending on the severity of the fight (Takahashi, 2013). The score to *Bravely Default* leaves the listener under no illusion that this is a reflection on JRPGs of the 1990s with thematic pieces in a multitude of styles across the game. This elaborate use of multiple different styles is again very similar to J-Pop: what the design team described as a deliberate appeal to Japanese fans, made by a Japanese development team is actually an amalgamation of multiple cultural musical styles that have been fused together in a way that is recognised by players of JRPGs as coherent.

At the end of the PS3/Xbox 360/Wii generation, it is clear that several factors are at play across CRPGs as a whole. Arguably the last real technological barriers to what composers could incorporate have been eliminated with the use of realistic samples and recorded musicians now commonplace in contrast to the previous generation where sound-chip timbres still existed. Composers across the JRPG/WRPG divide are looking to incorporate a wider degree of musical cultures, either timbrally, or stylistically though this remains subtle within WRPGs in comparison to the often outlandish and commonplace use within JRPGs. This is particularly noticeable when it comes to cues designed to accompany setting; an aesthetic trend that Sweeney describes. Nostalgia is present in both sub-genres, yet this is far more the case with JRPGs. With titles like *Ni no Kuni*, *The Last Story* and *Bravely Default*, these games are attempting to draw upon the types of JRPG of the Golden Generation – something that Schules, Peterson and Picard remark of the Japanese gaming industry as a whole (2018, p. 121). If Kizzire suggests that *Final Fantasy IX* was a deliberate attempt to hark back to earlier *Final Fantasy* games, then this generation is a second wave of nostalgia.

3.2.3 The Modern Age (PS4/Xbox One/Switch Generation): 2012 – Present

At the time of writing, the PlayStation 4, Xbox One and Nintendo Switch are the current series of home video consoles. Whilst the PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X are close to release, the video game landscape at the end of this generation is far-removed from how it starts. For the first time, both Sony and Microsoft offered mid-generation console refreshes that were substantially faster than their base models: the PlayStation 4 Pro and Xbox One X respective. After the relative commercial failure of Nintendo’s Wii-U, their Switch console – released in 2017 merged the traditional home-console experience with the on-the-go accessibility of mobile gaming. Mobile gaming itself has risen at an exponential rate with many video games

including CRPGs being ported to Android and iOS – by far the two most dominant mobile operating systems. PC gaming has continued to adapt to the changing landscape with services such as Valve’s Steam and Epic’s Epic Game Store offering both established and particularly indie developers multiple ways of distributing their games to players. The major console players continued to support indie games through their online stores as well, carrying on a trend that had begun the previous generation but like for PC would truly take off during this one. PC hardware has continued to lead the traditional consoles with virtual-reality (VR) gaming with devices such as the Oculus Rift and HTC Vive being released to critical acclaim several months before Sony did similar with its PlayStation VR. Game streaming including Google’s Stadia and Nvidia’s GeForce Now are giving gamers a multitude of ways to play hardware-demanding games with only a small set-top box as long as the user has a sufficiently appropriate internet connection.

Yet for all these advances in the ways that games are available to be played, the differences in CRPGs – and particularly their musical score design – between the PS3/Xbox 360 generation to PS4/Xbox One generation are arguably the smallest of any generation stated to date. Realistic samples and recorded instrumentalists are now commonplace. The increase in storage abilities in terms of Blu-Ray disks, SD cards, SSD drives, traditional mechanical hard-drives and the almost limitless potential of cloud-streaming has meant that size constraints to various elements of game design including the music are unlikely to restrict the composition process. As a consequence, there is arguably a great deal of homogeneity across video game genres, with a ‘sound’ easily replaceable from one game to another – particularly in the vast majority of CRPGs. Nevertheless, there are still outliers and exceptions or examples that truly stand out. This is what this last section of this CRPG timeline will cover.

The Tactical-RPG known as *The Banner Saga* was released for *Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, iOS* and *Android* on January 14, 2014 as the first in a trilogy of games. It would be the first title to be developed by Stoic Studio which was created by three former BioWare designers¹⁰³ – a studio renowned for its CRPGs (see *Baldur’s Gate*, *Jade Empire* and *Dragon Age: Origins* above) and was funded via Kickstarter. The game’s narrative structure has a setting of a fictional world inspired by Norse mythology where the world is stuck in a perpetual twilight since the sun stopped moving a few weeks before the beginning of the game. The plot tells the story of two playable human characters within a caravan whose paths cross as they attempt to survive from an ancient war-like race known as “The Dredge”. Consequently, there are parallels here with the Nordic-influence to *Skyrim*, for the landscape impacts upon much of the game’s score. To better get an appreciation of the similarities, observe the panoramas displayed in the openings to the two games shown in Fig. 3.11 and 3.12:

¹⁰³ As a reminder, Bioware is a Western developer.



Fig. 3.11 – Panoramic screenshot from the opening to *Skyrim*



Fig. 3.12 – Screenshots from the openings to *The Banner Saga* showing the Nordic aesthetic influence.

Written by American composer Austin Wintory, the music for the game was performed by the Dallas Winds concert band with solos performed by Mike Niemietz (prepared electric guitar), Randin Graves (didgeridoo and bukkehorn), Malukah, Peter Hollens and Jóhann Sigurðarson (vocals) and Taylor Davis (violin). Of the soloists, Wintory states; ‘I liked the idea of sourcing the musicians from the internet, since the game’s funding itself was too’ (Wintory, 2017). As influence for the game, Wintory cites the atmosphere of the game, its slower tempo due to decision making and the art style saying that ‘there’s a spectacularly beautiful, earthy and organic feel as a result...’ This links directly to Sweeney’s notion of aesthetics and the nationalistic properties of Grieg’s music. Here, Wintory could also be thought to draw inspiration from Jean Sibelius’ *Finlandia* for some of the more rousing tracks. He states:

I didn't try to write 'cold' music; I just try to let the game crawl under my skin, and however it makes me feel is then what I try to write. Fortunately, the game really made me feel cold and bleak, so

channeling that was simple. As for orchestration, I started off writing in a vaguely orchestral way, but brass very quickly seemed to take center stage. Something about horn solos felt simultaneously regal and noble, but also lonesome and vulnerable. The game needed to have both. A warrior's saddest days. Not pitiful but definitely very introspective. Pretty shortly I realized I was practically ignoring the strings, so I decided it'd be interesting to cut them completely and go for wind ensemble. Doing that felt immediately right! (Wintory, 2014b)

This design choice has distinct similarities to the variety of authentic instruments that Viking music is known for: the low woodwind supports the traditional bukkehorn, the flute simulates the panpipes, the oboe the skalmejen, the horn the Viking lur and the solo violin similar to instruments such as the tagelharpa or rebec. Wintory also maintains the Norse influence within the score through his use of both Norse proverbs and poetry in addition to Alex Thomas' writing from within the game itself. These were then translated into Icelandic by Davíð Þór Jónsson (Wintory, 2014).

The Banner Saga defies the typical WRPG sound that had been established to this point through an (almost) complete lack of orchestral strings as a timbral detail. Without this and the use of purely recorded instruments – and no synthesisers – the typical pad-sound is missing and a unique sonic-palate within CRPGs is created. The use of low woodwind and brass gives a far more authentic Viking style than Soule's score, although this is one that is much more intimate than the epicness of *Skyrim's*; something that is clear within the game's narrative as well where this is the survival of a tribe rather than an entire country. Through this level of authenticity, this can be thought of in the same vein as *Jade Empire* where Wall sought to utilise authentic Chinese-based instruments. Yet there, that was a fusion of the typical orchestral with these ethnic instruments whereas here, Wintory is distinct (for CRPGs) in his style. This is again an outlier from the pattern that had begun to emerge of WRPGs following an expanded eight-melody model. Just as *Eternal Sonata* had been an introspective musical score of hope and despair for Chopin's dream (albeit with a distinctly JRPG slant), this score again focuses on these emotions rather than of standard environmental/combat music. Finally, perhaps because of this focus, the game does not feature any character cues.

Dragon Age: Inquisition was released for November 18, 2014 for the PlayStation 3 and 4, Xbox 360 and Xbox One as well as Microsoft's *Windows* operating system. A continuation of the dark-fantasy setting of Thedas established in *Dragon Age: Origins* and *Dragon Age II*, the plot revolves around the player-controlled "Inquisitor" as they seek to defeat Corypheus – an ancient darkspawn who seeks domination of all of Thedas. For *Dragon Age: Inquisition*, Inon Zur – the composer for the previous two games – was replaced with Trevor Morris due to the desire by Audio Director Michael Kent to 'bring something brand new to the table' whilst keeping familiar themes (Kent, 2014). Additionally, the game's end-credits reveal that the score had some additional music by Ted Reedy and was orchestrated by David Shipp. Of the score, Kent states:

It is becoming more important because a trend right now is that less is more with music. You want to have music when it matters so you don't want it all the time... You just have it when it will have the most emotional impact. The trend towards that is good because having music all the time can be tiring to the ear. With this game we found the right moments to have the right music and the balance is really nice (ibid).

Morris describes his music as allowing him to 'break free of what had been done in the past' (Morris, 2014, 00:01:15). He suggests that the main theme is having a 'kind of a folk element to it – like almost like a folk song – and then it goes into more of a sweeping melodic type of thing' (ibid, 00:00:27). Whilst this is true, his score as a whole only differs arguably by its implementation. As alluded to above by Kent, Morris' score does not play throughout the game; instead fading in and out. This creates a fourth type of implementation over the wall-to-wall music that JRPGs had been using, the deliberately ambient music of the 2000s WRPGs that are designed not to be heard in the foreground, or the boss-only music that games such as *Demon's Souls* had made use of. Instead, cues would slowly become more ambient before fading into silence and only the background sounds such as bird song, the breeze or water would be heard.

As such, aside from the implementation of the music, it is difficult to agree with Kent that Morris brought something 'new to the table' for *Dragon Age: Inquisition*. Most of the cues heard are very much in keeping with the timbre and relative ambient-style of the past decade and a half. Whilst Morris has his own 'sound' that is different to Zur's, this is undeniably a WRPG musical score and even with the 'less-is-more' approach that it would be difficult to suggest that inter-changing the cues would make for a tremendously different soundscape. Neither can the cue placement be considered new; the expanded eight-melody model that WRPGs had been employing is very much apparent here again, with character cues again missing.

Nevertheless, one final musical feature of the game that does warrant mention is of the tavern songs. These folk-style songs were composed by Raney Shockne and performed by Elizaveta and Nick Stoubis for which the sheet music for each was made free to download between January 26, 2015 and February 9, 2015. Although not part of the main score, the ability to download the sheet music makes *Dragon Age: Inquisition* a rarity amongst WRPGs and something not really seen since *Arcanum: Of Steamworks and Magick Obscura* in 2001. Below is one of these songs – "Maker" – for reference as shown in Fig. 3.13 ([audio track 3.07](#)):

Music and Lyrics by Raney Shockne
Transcribed by Patti Rudisill

♩ = 60

Em/B (omit 3rd) D Em/B (omit 3rd)

5 D Em/B (omit 3rd)

11 D Bm Em/B (omit 3rd) Bm D Em/B (omit 3rd)

19 Em/B D/A Bm/F# G Em/B (omit 3rd) D

28 Em/B (omit 3rd) D Bm Em/B (omit 3rd) Bm

36 D Em/B (omit 3rd) Em/B D/A Bm/F# G Em/B (omit 3rd)

Fig. 3.13 – Official Transcription of “Maker” from *Dragon Age: Inquisition* by Raney Shockne and transcribed by Patti Rudisill.

It is revealing that the tavern songs are the only aspect of *Dragon Age: Inquisition*'s score that was formally transcribed into standard notation. These songs are the most melodic of all the cues heard in the game with the more ambient cues being much more difficult to be performed on an instrument such as the piano or guitar that sheet music of this kind is typically released for. This harkens back to the argument made with *Final Fantasy IV*. Sheet music for Western video games – is rare – simply because it does not transcribe well from the medium of background ambient orchestral cues to playable sheet music. When there are a few examples such as in *Daggerfall*, *Arcanum: Of Steamworks and Magick Obscura* or *Bastion*, these are often sought after by players of the games. By only publishing these songs, the enormous differences between JRPG and WRPG music is exposed.

In a continuation of the second wave of nostalgia that had been noticeable in CRPGs since *Ni no Kuni*, some Western developers were also back to how they could interest the fans of yesteryear. *Pillars of Eternity* – developed by American game studio Obsidian Entertainment – was released on March 26, 2015 and was

crowd-funded via *Kickstarter* raising almost \$4 million and becoming the highest funded video game at the time (Gilbert, 2017, p. 26). The game was designed in the style of *Baldur's Gate*, *Icewind Dale* and *Planescape: Torment*, however, it is set in its own fantasy universe rather than the *Dungeons and Dragons* IP. Taking place in the high fantasy world of Eora the player character explores the land of Dyrwood where a plague has infected the land leaving newborn infants without a soul. Composed by Justin Bell, the music is also in the style of these Infinity Engine¹⁰⁴ games (Bell, 2014) using neo-Romantic timbres, and blends "'tropes found in European folk and pre-Renaissance modal music" with modern techniques' (Prell, 2014). In this way, this is a continuation of what composers like Zur, Morris or Wall had done: fusing together either ancient or ethnic timbres and styles with a more traditional orchestral palate that would sound coherent and typical to players of WRPGs – even if there was a slightly new 'edge'. By doing so, this has obvious links to Kizzire's theory of nostalgia, similarly to what had been experienced in *Final Fantasy IX* with the references to the music of earlier games in an attempt to create an idealised past (Kizzire, 2014, p. 183). Bell expanded his description of the inspirations and aspirations for the music of the game in a *Kickstarter* update where he lists three words that he felt best described the music of the game; mystical, ancient and emotive (Bell, 2012). He states:

We chose mystical because of the importance of souls and the supernatural in Project Eternity's world. Ancient because we want the music to be grounded and appropriate to the setting. Emotive because the role of music in any game is first and foremost to provide dramatic and emotional context for the player (ibid).

Bell references other Infinity Engine game soundtracks as inspiration for his own score in addition to *The Elder Scrolls* (III, IV, and V), *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* (dir. Jackson, 2012 – 14) and the scores of Basil Poledouris (Bell, 2014b). I would also list Harry Gregson-Williams' score for *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (dir. Adamson, 2005) as stylistically similar as well. The game's score is clearly a pastiche – a homage to the Infinity Engine games listed above with the scores by Soule and Zur and indeed, the cues are very much in the style of Zur's thematic writing – or perhaps even the earlier writing of Heberling – as well as the orchestrations mentioned in the above films. Take for example the main theme – titled on the OST as 'Eora' – of which a transcription has been provided in **Appendix 3.1** ([audio track 3.08](#)). This example was chosen as a cue traditionally having something of an 'overture' atmosphere to it (to use the model of *Ultima III* and *Dragon Quest*) which suggests that the three terms Bell describes are likely to be portrayed here. In the cue, we see a traditionally orchestrated piece without any ethnic instruments. Clear melodies are heard in the upper woodwind and upper strings with supporting parts in the brass and minimal percussion. The mysticism that Bell describes could be the timbral entry of the choir and the choice of the F# - E/G# chords heard at bar 10 as well as the flute duet with female vocal accompaniment at bar 23. The ancient, perhaps the opening eight bars: the orchestration is very sparse here with the harp acting like a

¹⁰⁴ The Infinity Engine was the game engine that powered *Baldur's Gate 1+2*, *Icewind Dale* and *Planescape: Torment*.

strummed-string instruments, perhaps akin to a lute and the nasal timbres of the oboe and bassoon perhaps being representative of a medieval shawm. In this way, we again have a somewhat ‘nostalgic rhetoric’ (Kizzire, 2014, p. 190)– not only is the music trying to represent the ancient of the game’s narrative, but is drawing on player’s memories – real or otherwise – of previous Infinity Engine games. The emotive is rather a broad term, but the climax of the piece around bar 35 with the triple-octave lush string melody perhaps is the best example of this term.

Aside from the main theme, the cues for *Pillars of Eternity* are much more thematic than those by original Infinity Engine games, featuring clear melodies in standard eight-bar phrases played on one instrument before changing to another instrument; a clear example of this is the cue ‘Defiance Bay’ – first heard in the game in the city of the same name. The rate of harmonic change however is often slow, usually revolving ‘around long, single sustained notes, chords, or arpeggios, before the music continues’ (Li, 2017) and a notable avoidance of percussion outside of the combat tracks arguably creates the ‘mystical’ feel Bell referenced in his Kickstarter update. Of the use of loops in the game, Bell also addresses this in another Kickstarter post stating, ‘Music will always loop, but it will be longer in areas where the player spends a lot of time (like quest hubs) and shorter in areas where the player doesn’t’ (ibid). Ultimately, the inclusion of *Pillars of Eternity* in this study, stems from the creators clear and notable references to CRPGs of yesteryear in all aspects of the game – including music. Its cue placement falls almost exactly into an expanded eight-melody model found throughout many WRPGs of Barton’s Modern Age which only goes to further reinforce this nostalgia.

Crypt of the NecroDancer – which was released for Windows, OS X and Linux on April 23, 2015 – is a rogue-like video game combined with elements of the ludic genre of rhythm-games.¹⁰⁵ Players move Cadence – the main character - by moving her in time with the game’s music using a dance-pad, mouse and keyboard or gamepad (Stark, 2013). The narrative structure is a darkly-comedic, fantastical setting of a crypt in which Cadence falls into whereupon her heart is stolen by the NecroDancer. To escape, Cadence must fight through the crypt’s multiple levels/dungeons fighting the NecroDancer’s minions in order to defeat him and reclaim her heart. The story expands via western-inspired art-based cutscenes to include multiple family members named after various musical terminology, including her mother Melody, her grandmother Aria and her father Dead Ringer whilst wielding a golden lute. Enemies too, make use of music and instruments within their design, for instance the end boss of the jungle zone is named “King Conga” as shown in Fig. 3.14:

¹⁰⁵ Rhythm games challenge a player’s sense of rhythm requiring players to press buttons in synchronisation with button prompts on screen. Popular games in this category include *Guitar Hero*, *Rock Band* and *Just Dance*.



Fig. 3.14 - Musical inspiration used within the design of the character “King Conga” from *Crypt of the NecroDancer*

The music for the game was composed by Danny Baranowsky – an American composer – who designed the music to vary in speed and rhythmic complexity the further the player advanced.¹⁰⁶ With music so much part of the ludic style as much as affecting or enhancing the narrative aspects of the game, Baranowsky (2017) states that he felt it was ‘a rare pleasure in game music for the soundtrack to be the centerpiece of the game’. Whilst discussion of the music is arguably more pertinent to papers on rhythm games, there are several features that make it worthwhile within this section of the thesis.

Firstly, a typical orchestral WRPG score is eschewed in favour of a prominent percussive beat, synthesised melodic and chordal parts and a driving bass line and thus by doing so, musically the game is pushed far more in the direction of JRPGs, despite the Western heritage of the composer and development team. Gone are the motifs that fade in and out, rising and falling in prominence. Instead, the music of the game is constant from the start of each level to the end; as is necessitated by the gameplay – another feature that is very reminiscent of JRPGs with their standard wall-to-wall implementation. The stylistic choices of cues are eclectic; for instance, the ice-and-fire world of zone three has a cue that – depending on the temperature – ranges from electronica to hard rock/metal. One particularly notable part of the score is the diegetic quality of the shopkeeper who sings (using the Omnisphere patch “Classical Tenor Ah – f”) as the player approaches him; even if the player cannot currently see him at the time – see Fig. 3.15. This single patch is then manipulated to cover every pitch range that Baranowsky chooses creating a deliberately comedic and artificial effect which nevertheless suits the deliberate SNES-based retro-feel of the game. By alluding to this console, again a JRPG-like nostalgia is created due to the greater number of JRPGs available for the system in comparison to WRPGs. For the game, *Crypt of the NecroDancer* won the 2015 Game Developers Choice

¹⁰⁶ An alternate version of the soundtrack was created by Jules Conroy amongst other musicians which can be downloaded as extra content and featured rock and metal arrangements of Baranowsky’s original tracks.

Award for “Best Audio”. Further information on the music for the game can be found in one of the few detailed interviews Baranowsky partakes in with Lee Tyrrell.¹⁰⁷

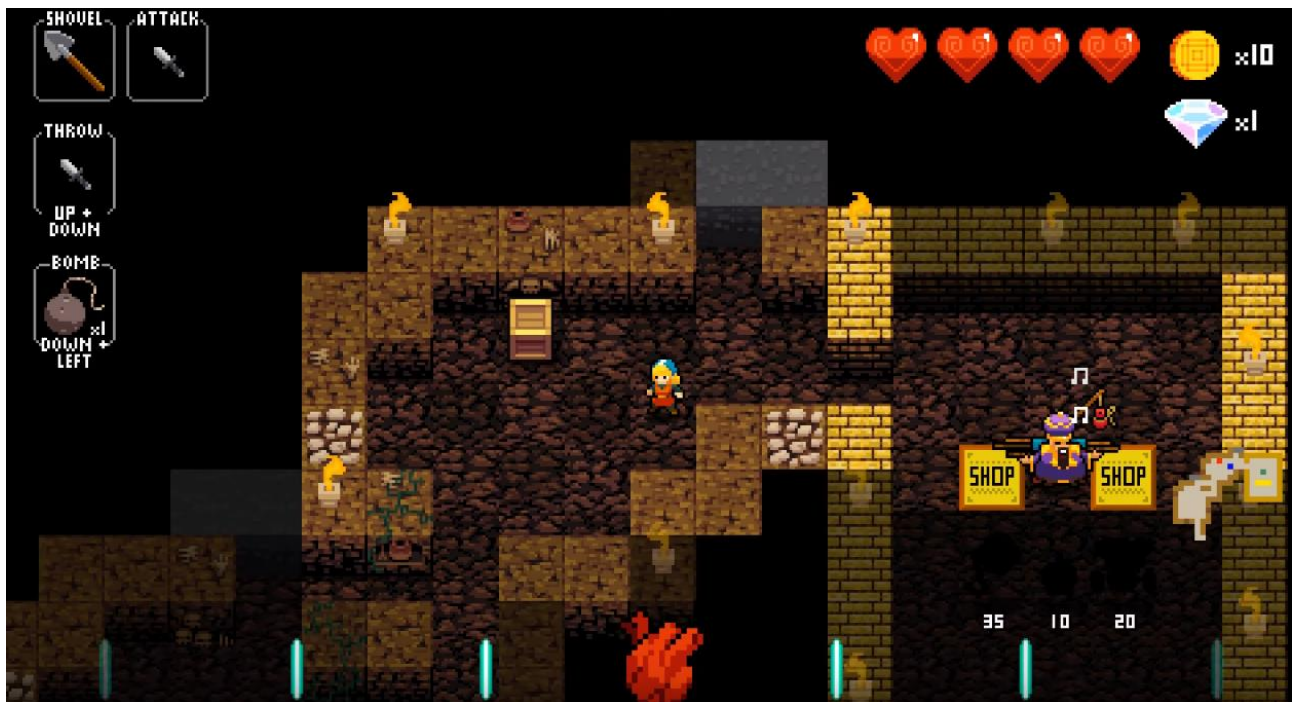


Fig. 3.15 – Screenshot of *Crypt of the Necrodancer* with the shopkeeper singing on the right-hand side of the screen. At the bottom either side of the pixelated heart are the beats to the musical cue playing.

Crypt of the Necrodancer is a CRPG that perhaps exemplifies the innovative nature of indie games. In the same way that *Bastion* rejected a typical orchestral style, *Crypt of the Necrodancer* actively seeks to emulate the JRPGs of the SNES in terms of both visual style and the melodically and stylistically varied cues found within.

Continuing with indie-developed games, the CRPG *Undertale* was released on September 15, 2015 by the American game developer and composer Toby Fox, who developed, produced, wrote, composed and designed the game. Only additional art – which was primarily created by Temmie Chang – is an aspect of the game Fox did not solely create. Beginning life as a Kickstarter project which raised 1022% of its initial target (Suszek, 2013), *Undertale* has since become both a critical and commercial success. Inspired by older CRPG series such as *Mother* and *Mario & Luigi* RPGs along with bullet hell shooters such as the *Touhou Project* series (Fox, 2013), Fox undoubtedly chose to look to JRPGs for inspiration. Following a typical “Hero’s Journey” narrative to a certain degree, *Undertale* is set in a fictional world where humans and monsters once co-existed side by side, but after a war in which humanity won, monsters have been forced underground. The player-controlled character – a young child – inadvertently falls underground and encounters both

¹⁰⁷ Although no direct information was referenced from this interview, the wealth of information contained within the online video would undoubtedly be extremely useful in anyone wishing to learn more about the creation of the score for this game and is referenced here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZS4SVlkYg>

friendly and hostile monsters alike as they attempt to return to the surface. *Undertale* has three definitive endings depending on the choices the player makes and each of them affects the music the player hears as the game progresses.

As the definitive auteur to the project, Fox was in a relatively unique position within video game design to craft a soundtrack that completely matched his vision for what he wanted the game to play and sound like. Matthew Perez's Master's dissertation "Undertale: A Case Study in Ludomusicology" and Jason Yu's "An Examination of Leitmotifs and Their Use to Shape Narrative in *Undertale*" are the two most detailed pieces of literature surrounding the music of the game. For the benefit of this chapter however, the narrative and cultural impacts on the soundtrack will be outlined. As stated, the music alters depending upon the actions the player makes throughout the game leading to a "pacifist", a "neutral" or a "genocide" ending. According to Perez, 'one of the most interesting methods of communicating to players is the use of harmonic stability. As a player begins making progress toward the genocide ending, much of *Undertale*'s soundtrack is intentionally distorted for the purpose of punishing game participants' evil behavior' (Perez, 2017, p. 74). This impact of a character's actions and their effect on the narrative and thus the music arguably make *Undertale* a true RPG where decisions of morality ultimately affect the experiences a player will have. From a cultural perspective, there is clear case of Fox being influenced by the cultural heritage of Japanese role-playing games from the 1990s.

There are multiple uses of leitmotifs – reminiscent of JRPGs such as *Final Fantasy VI* – which are used throughout the game, often based on simple short melodies. Take for example the opening four bars to 'Once Upon a Time' – the first piece of music heard in the game (shown below in Fig. 3.16 and [audio track 3.09](#)). This motif – according to Yu – is used no less than 13 times throughout the game in one form or another and serves as the game's main theme; eliciting 'a sense of home and safety, and to serve as checkpoints for the player at critical points in the game' (Yu, 2016). Multiple other instances of leitmotifs inhabit the score, drawing attention to both characters and locations. Timbrally, the game draws on a variety of styles. According to Luhrs (2016):

In its first few tracks, *Undertale* initially comes across as a faithful tribute to the NES era à la Shovel Knight. Once the piano kicks in on "Ruins," though, it becomes clear that Toby Fox is working from a wider palette. In fact, one of the defining features of *Undertale*'s soundtrack is the way it combines and fluctuates between chiptunes, more sophisticated soundfonts, and occasionally live instruments.

♩=66

1. 2.

Semiquaver reverb

10 Semiquaver reverb

Fade out 2nd time only

On repeat, no accompaniment

On repeat, no accompaniment

Fig. 3.16 – Transcription of ‘Once Upon a Time’ from *Undertale* by Toby Fox

This eclectic mix of different styles of music is another throwback to the JRPG scores of the 1990s. Melody-dominated homophony is the clear texture of choice that Fox employs within his score, helping with the use of leitmotifs and memorable melodies that JRPGs are famous for. Of all the tracks, the final combat track “Megalovania” is amongst the game’s longest; lasting just over two and a half minutes. Ultimately, it is clear that whilst Toby Fox is a US-born composer and developer, inspiration both in game design and music scoring has come from Japan. By doing so, nostalgia – not just in gameplay – but in its musical score is created through the use of past and present styles (Kizzire, 2014, p. 195).

Arguably one of the most critically and commercially acclaimed CRPGs of all time, *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* (henceforth known as *The Witcher 3*) was released for *Windows*, *PlayStation 4* and *Xbox One* on May 19, 2015. The second sequel to *The Witcher* (see above), the developer CD Projekt Red pushed every area of the game’s development over what they had done before. Resuming the story of “Geralt of Rivia”, the game’s core narrative – whilst following Campbell’s “Hero’s Journey” with Geralt’s fight against the “Wild Hunt” – also pushes it to include a father searching for his lost child in a manner that pushes the game’s narrative structure just as much as the expected monomyth. Set between the four lands of “White Orchard”, “Velen”,

“Novigrad” and the “Skellige Isles”, *The Witcher 3* continues the Eastern European-influenced fantastical narrative structure with multiple aspects of the game affected by this design heritage. The composers for the game were Marcin Przybyłowicz and Mikolai Stroinski with additional music by the Polish folk band Percival. The main themes from the previous two games were also incorporated as well as the “Sorceress’ Theme” from *The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings*. Amongst the wealth of ethnic instruments used in the game were hammered dulcimer, accordion, kemenchie, mandolin, bouzouki, saz, hurdy-gurdy, bowed gusli, kemenche, yayli tanbur, gheychak – all originating from Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle-East or Asia. Stroinski (2015) states:

I think this is also a case when some folk instruments may be even a little bit out of tune, which helps the authenticity of the world. There is something primeval about this sound, which reflects this violent world of knives, bare bones and blood; these may be negative connotations with death, but are very real at the same time. Perhaps that's the element that brings the story closer to us from the fantasy world.

Whilst there are more traditional Western instruments used, these are limited to strings, flutes and percussion. What is remarkable however, is that – with the exception of the main themes to the games – there is much less reliance on brass instruments used in the score than in other fantasy CRPGs both from the West and Japan. Where brass would often be most prominent would be in the combat tracks, but instead, fast strings, rousing percussion and prominent vocal lines sung in a variety of Slavic and Northern European languages are heard instead (Orłowski, 2016). Another important timbral aspect of the score is the wealth of vocals used within it including the “RED Witches Choir” and numerous performers of the above instruments also lending their voice to the score. The multitude of cues that make use of female vocals within them was a deliberate link to the game’s narrative; within *The Witcher* games sorceresses are the only real wielders of magic, and so a female-only choir was a ‘fitting approach’ (Stroinski, 2015). With a reported five hours of music being created for the game (ibid), one of the biggest concerns for the score was – according to junior sound designer Hanna Kubiak (2016) – that it ‘must be brutal and dirty and send shivers all over your body when you hear it’.

If we return to Chatman, we see somewhat of a difference to the majority of the WRPGs listed to date and more of an adherence to a JRPG score design when it comes to the inclusion of character themes. With cues to represent Geralt, Ciri, King Bran and the Ladies of the Woods amongst others, *The Witcher 3*’s score contains this fourth component of a narrative that so many WRPGs forgo. Additionally, with the inclusion of so much vocal timbres within the cues, performed with lyrics rather than merely vocalisations which many sampled choir libraries are capable of, it is perhaps unsurprising that the use of melody is also more closely representative of JRPGs than WRPGs. The cues are distinctly more thematic than those heard in *Skyrim* for example, leading to another notable difference in score design.

With the number of differences that *The Witcher* series – and particularly *The Witcher 3* – have in comparison to other games described in this thesis, it is difficult to suggest that these games are WRPGs, despite being made in having many of the visual and gameplay features outlined in section 1.3.2. As such it can be argued that these games do not fit into the standard WRPG/JRPG model. For the game, *The Witcher 3* won amongst many other awards, the 2015 NAVGTR Award for “Best Original Dramatic Score (Franchise)”.

Returning to Japan, Square Enix released *Final Fantasy XV* on November 29, 2016. Shifting away from the standard JRPG play-style, the ludic genre is more Action-RPG than any of its predecessors. Starting life as *Final Fantasy Versus XIII*, the game was retitled and became a main-game title in 2012. Like *Skyrim* and *The Witcher 3*, *Final Fantasy XV* features an open world and its narrative structure sees the game set in the fictional world of Eos where all but the kingdom of Lucis is under the dominion of the empire of Niflheim. Eventually peace is sought and a ceasefire is proposed with the heir to the Lucian throne – Prince Noctis – marrying Princess Lunafreya from a neighbouring kingdom. A treacherous attack disrupts the ceasefire and Prince Noctis – who by this time has been stranded with only his three friends and bodyguards – must rescue the magic crystal of Lucian that defends the kingdom and defeat Niflheim. To do so, a “road-trip” quest begins with the four playable characters travelling across the world using their car as the main mode of transport.

Upon the game’s initial trailer, the line “This is a fantasy based on reality” was shown in white italic font upon a black background as shown in Fig. 3.17:



Fig. 3.17 - The introductory line to the first trailer of *Final Fantasy Versus XIII* – later *Final Fantasy XV*

Director Hajime Tabata – in an interview with *Gamespot* – revealed what was meant by the quote; that the team wished for the cities and cultures within them to have a basis on real-world ones, for example Shinjuku in Japan, Havana in Cuba and Venice in Italy. These real-world influences in game design are often mirrored in the music for the game. Composed by veteran video game composer Yoko Shimomura with assistance from Yoshitaka Suzuki, Tetsuya Shibata, Yoshino Aoki, Shota Nakama and Nobuo Uematsu, the music for *Final Fantasy XV* began with the trailer’s accompanying music in 2006 and continued throughout the game’s long development over the next ten years. Within the score, in addition to the expected orchestral pieces, styles

range from the bossa-nova/smooth jazz fusion of “Relax and Reflect”, the country and blues harmonica solo of “Broken Down”, the folk rock of “CINDY”, the use of the sitar in “ARDYN”, the progressive rock “The Hunters” and the accordion melody of the European folk-inspired nature of “Altissia” (the city is modelled on Venice as stated above). The wealth of US-influenced tracks within the score reflects the game’s narrative and the “road trip” nature of the game suits the stereotypical road-trips made across North America. This also extends to the use of the Boston-based “Video Game Orchestra” which recorded the score for the downloadable content (DLC) “Episode Duscae” – a notable outsourcing from the Japanese company’s Japan-centric design (Van Duine, 2015). Nevertheless, despite Shimomura’s experience however, she confessed approaching a series with as much heritage as *Final Fantasy* was daunting; ‘It’s of course my first attempt with the series – and as a result, the approach is kind of... more tentative’ (Shimomura, 2016) and cites Nobuo Uematsu as a particularly important influence in her music design (Shimomura, 2016b, 00:02:46).

The music for *Final Fantasy XV* continues a trend found in JRPG score design of amalgamating a multitude of different styles of music from a variety of different cultures. Yet, like the *Mother* series, this is a game that is actively pushing a Western influence – the road-trip framing of the plot is clearly based on the long road-trips synonymous with America. As such, this is a JRPG that is being influenced by Western music more than any other *Final Fantasy* game – and arguably any JRPG before it – and is a game whose music can be thought of “a fantasy based on reality”.

Divinity: Original Sin II was released on September 14, 2017 by the Belgian development team Larian Studios and shows a slight deviation away from WRPG-design. Whilst much of the game’s make-up is similar, there are several interesting elements that make it worthy of note; not least the music, for it is closer in style to *The Witcher* series than any other. The soundtrack for the first game – *Divinity: Original Sin* – was written by the Russian-Belgian composer Kirill Pokrovsky who passed away in June 2015 only a year after the game’s release. For the sequel, Larian Studios brought in Borislav Slavov – a Bulgarian composer who stated that he had to develop his own style rather than attempting to emulate Pokrovsky’s whilst at the same time ‘make it as varied as possible, as well as thematic, playful and quirky’ (Slavov, 2017). Arguably drawing upon influence from games such as *Dragon Age: Origins*, *Divinity: Original Sin II* has six origin stories were created for different characters of all different backgrounds. Slavov wrote individual character themes for them all; a feature uncommon in WRPGs and much more in keeping with JRPGs. The overarching timbre for the game differs as well; the credits tell us that whilst there is a familiar western orchestral sound used – recorded by the Hungarian Studio Orchestra at Tom-Tom Studio in Budapest – Slavov also incorporates a variety of instrumentalists playing instruments such as an ud and other ethnic stringed instruments, an accordion, a variety of prominent woodwind instruments and a female choir. Slavov also incorporates various sampled instrumental libraries within the mix including the Spectrasonics Heart of Asia. This deliberate push away from the established WRPG sound leads to similarities with *The Witcher* series. Consider the track “Mead, Gold, and Blood” – also known as “Ifan’s Theme”. Recorders, orchestral strings and ethnic strings with hand

drums as a percussion background help to push the beat in a moderately fast simple-quadruple metre. Compare this to “Drink Up, There’s More!” from *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* (shown below in Fig. 3.18 and heard in [audio track 3.10](#) and [audio track 3.11](#) respectively) and the similarities are obvious.

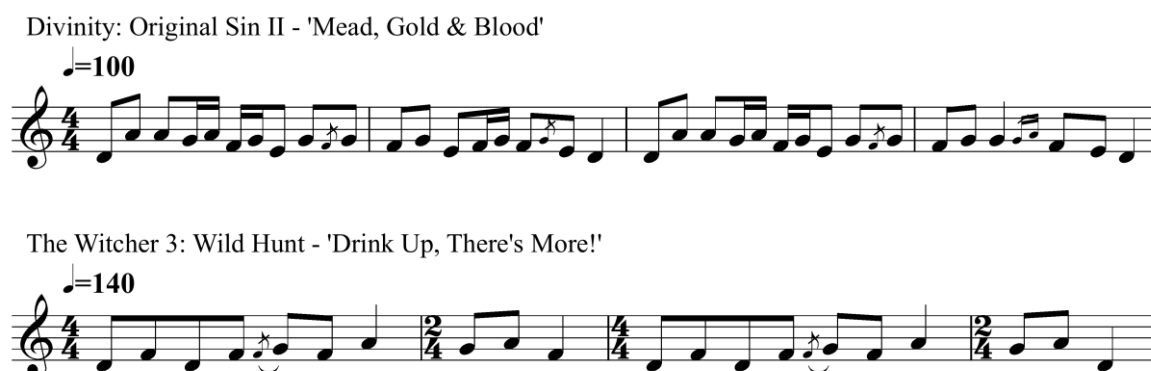


Fig. 3.18 – Transcription of the initial woodwind melody heard in both ‘Mead, Gold & Blood’ from *Divinity: Original Sin II* by Kirill Pokrovsky and ‘Drink Up, There’s More!’ from *The Witcher 3* by Percival.

Whilst the melody of the ‘Mead, Gold & Blood’ is perhaps slightly more complicated, they both share a limited pitch-range of a perfect fifth between tonic and dominant. Both start and end on the same pitch – the tonic D – and both contain grace notes to give a more stylistically typical folk-like feel. As the cue develops, ‘Drink Up, There’s More’, is arguably the more complex of the two with a second recorder part giving a contrapuntal texture, but both have distinct melodies. Slavov does vary the stylistic properties of the score more than Percival with piano featuring more heavily in *Divinity: Original Sin II* – a timbral choice very seldom used in WRPGs where keyboard instruments of choice tend to be organ, harpsichord or celeste. Both games also make use of adaptive audio with *Divinity: Original Sin II*’s implementation using such techniques as transition from major to minor depending on whether the player is in a safe or dangerous place (Gaming Audio News, 2018).

Just as with *The Witcher* series, *Divinity: Original Sin II*, is somewhat on an outlier from the JRPG/WRPG approach that has been discussed throughout Chapters Two and Three. Its musical score clearly has a number of similarities with aforementioned *Witcher* games – particularly *The Witcher III*. As Larian studios moves onto *Baldur’s Gate III*, it will be interesting to see whether this game’s musical score moves back towards the scores of Hoenig and Soule or whether it keeps its Eastern-European influences.

The penultimate game to be detailed in this canonical study is the JRPG *Octopath Traveler* – released for *Nintendo Switch* on July 13, 2018. This is a game similar in style to *Bravely Default* in as such that it is a nostalgic homage to earlier JRPGs and has a form of graphics described by the developers as “HD-2D” – shown below in Fig. 3.18:

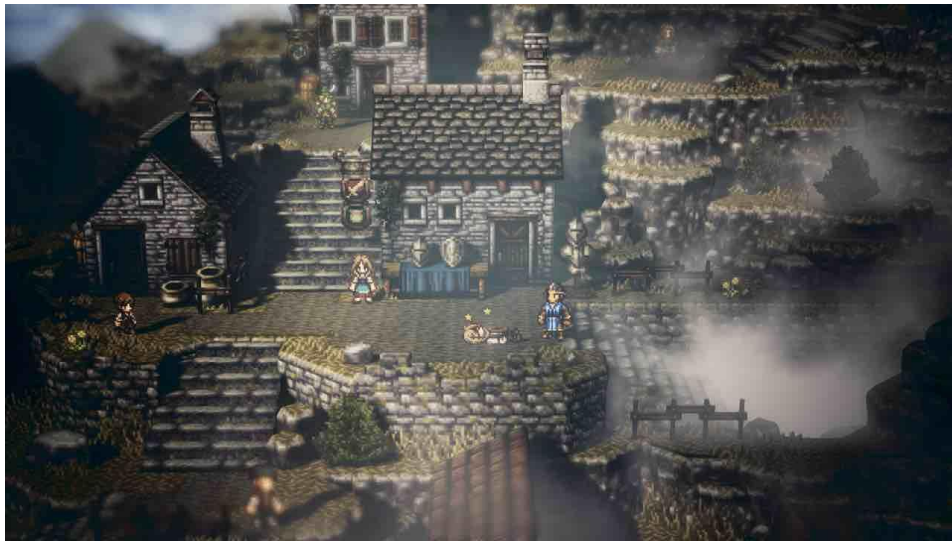


Fig. 3.19 - Screenshot of *Octopath Traveler* showing the “HD-2D” graphics described by the developers

Released for the *Nintendo Switch*, the game’s narrative structure features a fantasy setting in the land of Orsterra where once thirteen deities ruled over everything, until one of their number – Galdera – fell from grace and was sealed away in the “afterworld”. The plot of the game sees eight characters individual stories and history intertwine until they are forced to confront Galdera in the final battle (hence “octopath”¹⁰⁸). Composed by Yasunori Nishiki, his ideas about the music for the game harkened back to the past and arguably the music of JRPGs similarities to J-Pop:

When I thought about what contributes to the special charm of older RPG music, I realized that it’s generally simple and really catchy. And while you can get some gorgeous sound by using live instruments, doing so can also weaken the punch of the melody and end up blurring the player’s impression of the song as a whole, which was something I wanted to avoid. With that in mind, I tossed out, to some extent, the traditional method of arranging for orchestra. Instead, I arranged the orchestra instruments in a style akin to simple, catchy vocal songs with strong melodies (Nishiki, 2018).

Stating his previous work for projects such as anime helped him developing these strong melodic pieces of music (ibid), Nishiki composed themes for each of the eight principal characters, trying to draw on the multifaceted aspects to their personalities and exploiting them as leitmotifs as he manipulated their characteristics as the plot advanced. In addition to melody and harmony, Nishiki sought ‘to have instruments symbolising each of the eight characters... to give each theme its own individual touch’ (Nishiki, 2018b). Unusual choices within the orchestration of these include a chromatic harmonica for Tressa and an alto saxophone for Alfyn. Using Kizzire’s theory, nostalgia is clearly created through the game’s score, with the

¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, the initials of the principal characters spell ‘octopath’.

immensely thematic writing of each cue highly reminiscent of older JRPGs and their equally thematic cues which marries well to the HD-2D graphics that the design team chose. Of his music, Nishiki states:

As game visuals became more and more realistic like films, cinematic sound designs and musical styles also began to be adopted for game music. However, I feel there is the drawback – that memorable game music has become less. Meanwhile, games with pixel arts similar to the old days began to increase. Their soundtracks are also memorable, with a timeless feel. I think the reason is that the people having played the classic video games during their impressionable ages in the 80's and 90's began to play the role in the center of game development. They are trying to bring back the emotions they felt before in new games. I believe we are in a transition stage, and the need for memorable game music will increase again (Nishiki, 2018).

As with many JRPG scores, the amount of unique musical material found in the game is substantial – whilst not a completely reliable source of the exact length of the cues within the game, its soundtrack's total length is almost four hours in length. *Octopath Traveler* is a love letter to JRPGs of yesteryear. From its visual design and narrative that is somewhat reminiscent of early *Final Fantasy* games to the melodious score that prioritises 'strong melodies', this is a game whose sole rationale is to create nostalgia. Its musical score expands the eight-melody model rather than supplanting it in a way that *Chrono Cross* or *Phantasy Star* do through their inclusion of science-fiction elements within their narratives. The game won "Original Light Mix Score, New IP" for the 2019 NAVGTR Awards.

The final game chosen in this canonical history is *Final Fantasy VII: Remake*. Released for *PlayStation 4* on April 10, 2020, this is designed as the first part in a larger reimagining of the original *Final Fantasy VII* with a huge expansion to the original game's opening chapters (set in Midgar) and multiple differences to the narrative. The game is a fascinating example in nostalgic video game design. Made using Unreal Engine 4, its visuals are – at the time of writing – state-of-the art. In place of the MIDI musical score and silent characters (no character is voiced and all dialogue was displayed through speech bubbles in the original) are high-quality samples – combined with recorded orchestral instruments¹⁰⁹ – and a multitude of voice actors. It replicates many aspects of the original down to the smallest detail whilst expanding almost all other elements of the game's design.

For the score, there was again a fusion of the old with the new. Led by Masashi Hamauzu¹¹⁰ and Mitsuto Suzuki, an array of almost a dozen musicians – including Yasunori Nishiki – rearranged many of Uematsu's original themes – not just from the original game's Midgar section, but throughout *Final Fantasy VII*. Some of these were new arrangements of the originals, some were new cues with old motifs incorporated and

¹⁰⁹ As shown by the game's credits.

¹¹⁰ As a reminder, Hamauzu was a co-composer for *Final Fantasy X* with Uematsu and was the sole composer for *Final Fantasy XIII*, meaning that by bringing together Uematsu's original melody-driven motifs, with the post-Uematsu era's sound, again creates a fusion of old and new.

where new cues and music was needed due to the newly expanded story, Hamauzu, Suzuki and several others in the arrangement team composed entirely new material. These fall into two categories within the game: the non-diegetic underscore and the various diegetic moments across the game.

Within the non-diegetic underscore, the use of leitmotifs found in the original is once again utilised. Aerith's theme – described and shown in Chapter Two – is expanded further, this time to incorporate more instances of it depending on player choices and the game's larger story. These cues include 'A Chance Meeting in Sector 8', 'Aerith's Theme – Home Again', 'Evergreen Park/The First Guy I Ever Loved', 'A Certain Gaudiness', 'A Familiar Flower', the various dress scenes and the credits. To provide evidence as to how Aerith's theme has been re-arranged for this remake, consider **appendix 3.3** ([audio track 3.12](#)) where I have transcribed 'Aerith's Theme – Home Again'; arguably the main iteration of her leitmotif in the game. This cue, arranged by Yoshinori Nakumura is first heard when seeing Aerith's house in in sector five of Midgar. When we compare it against the original, there are various similarities and also differences that immediately apparent. Nakumura uses very similar timbral choices, focusing instead on expanding the woodwind and including a glockenspiel to pick out certain notes of the melody. Whilst the harp played the majority of the arpeggios and broken chords in the original, now the piano is used instead. The vast bulk of Uematsu's original melodic and harmonic material is also employed, but consider bar 17 in the remake – notice Nakumura stays in the tonic of D major during the oboe melody rather than move to the relative minor (Bm) in the original. This gives the cue an overall brighter and lighter feel and arguably draws attention to the changes to the narrative that the design team made, not only for Aerith, but for the game as a whole compared to the original.

Most notable amongst the diegetic cues are the music discs which are collectables found during the course of a playthrough which can then be played through a jukebox. These "discs" – although they are never actually seen as a physical disc – are single songs and are arrangements of many of the original games' cues. There are 31 in total which showcase an astonishingly diverse array of musical styles, from dubstep to reggae, jazz to electronica, country, EDM and more. The sheer variety of styles included in these 31 arrangements arguably makes this game one of the most musically diverse JRPGs ever created, although to hear the stylistic qualities of each disc requires standing close to a jukebox for several minutes at a time and would perhaps not be experienced by all players. Additionally, the fact that they are collectables, means that players would have to go out of their way to try and find them, again, limiting players' exposure to the diverse nature of these diegetic tracks. Additionally, we have for the first time in the series, a diegetic stinger – the famous *Final Fantasy* victory theme heard at the end of a successful battle for the player is now heard at several moments in the game by the character Barrett singing it. It is also heard sung by the spectators upon the successful completion of an arena battle where during chapter nine the characters of Cloud and Aerith face off against a literal evil house! This clearly reinforces Ivănescu's description of appropriation and pastiche – the main melodies heard within these discs, are the undertones that players of the original can recognise before hearing them in new arrangements.

Uematsu himself was also involved in *Final Fantasy VII: Remake*, writing the game's main theme titled "Hollow" – a song whose meaning is meant to 'reflect Cloud's state of mind' in addition to bringing to the listener the image of rain (Frontline Gaming Japan, 2020). This was also heard as an instrumental cue – most notably later in chapter eight of the game – but is hard to state whether it is meant to be an environmental cue or a character theme here. If "Hollow" and by extension this background cue is Cloud's theme – he did not have one in the original¹¹¹ – then narratively it provides a mirror to Aerith's theme heard earlier in the chapter. The player at this moment has Cloud deciding as to whether to help a variety of Aerith's neighbours with odd-jobs. If this is just used as an environmental cue, then it becomes arguably more difficult to understand the significance of incorporating this 'main theme'. Additionally, the original game's main theme is *also* heard within the game's score, lending credence perhaps that this is to be very much associated with Cloud. This is important as will be discussed in the following chapter when it comes to a male character theme.

Like the original, *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* continues in the JRPG vein of having mostly continuous wall-to-wall background music, despite the Music Supervisor Keiji Kawamori suggesting that during the planning stages they were considering no background music at all in order to create a sense of realism (Kawamori, 2020). This musical design choice would have been a staggering directional shift – both in terms of *Final Fantasy* and JRPGs at large – although would not have been without precedent, considering Japanese-developed games like *Demon's Souls* discussed above. However, by continuing with this tradition, Kizzire's nostalgia theory can once again be used as an argument for why the development team continued with the musical implementation of the original in addition to Huron's expectation theory – this is a remake after all and players would expect many characteristics of the original. Van Elferen's ALI model is also appropriate to reference here – the affect that the original had over twenty years prior is felt to this day and the musical literacy players have of JRPGs considering the time that has passed would likely be both broad and deep; particularly as this remake continues in the tradition of making use of a huge number of both timbral choices and styles. The interactivity heard here – both in the leitmotifs that dominate the game – and through its adaptive music found most notably in its use of horizontal layering during the battle themes (Hamauzu, 2020) both aid in creating a coherent score. Van Elferen's ALI model of immersion is clearly shown here, particularly for players of the original:

- Affect is achieved through player's personal investment through memory, emotion and identification – particularly through characters such as Aerith and Tifa and their corresponding character themes/leitmotifs.

¹¹¹ Whilst *Final Fantasy VIII* also did not have a main theme for its principal character, all single-player *Final Fantasy* titles since then have featured a character theme for the main character. Consequently, by considering 'Hollow' as Cloud's theme, this is Uematsu and the audio team perhaps rectifying an omission.

- The styles that Hamauzu and Suzuki employ – whilst wide – are not disparate enough that players would have a difficult time creating the connections that Thagard’s definition of coherence demands. Musical literacy is therefore achieved through this eclectic mix, which as discussed throughout these chapters is arguably only made possible through the game’s illogicality within its narrative¹¹².
- There are multiple instances of musical interaction; both through the manipulation of leitmotifs based on player choice and through the aforementioned discs.

Final Fantasy VII: Remake stands at the pinnacle of what it is to be a modern JRPG. This is a game that looks over twenty years into the past and reimagines it as a game for the present. Hamauzu, Suzuki and the rest of the composition team created a score that adheres to many of the JRPG traditions, whilst including less typical JRPG implementation in adaptive cues. The game fuses fantasy and science-fiction in equal measure across its narrative and to maintain the coherency of the core story of the original whilst reimagining it for a modern audience is undoubtedly in-part down to its nostalgic musical score design.

As we approach the end of the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One console generation, nostalgia is sweeping the CRPG market on both sides of the divide. For JRPGs, games such as *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* and *Octopath Traveler* are clear examples of where development studios are looking back at the past to influence their games of the future. Yet, this is not just limited to JRPGs. In the West, a sequel to *Baldur’s Gate II* is – at the time of writing – in early access, developed by Larian Studios – the development studio behind *Divinity: Original Sin II*. A public spat between CD Projekt Red and *The Witcher* author Andrzej Sapkowski left that CRPG franchise looking finished, but after the game’s success, an out-of-court settlement was released and rumours of another *Witcher* game are beginning to circulate. Mobile gaming platforms, the hybrid nature of the Switch and the introduction of gaming streaming services mean that publishers can exploit a back-catalogue to whole new generation players. Therefore, whilst a history such as the above can age very quickly, as of the end of 2020, it can only be argued that CRPGs continue to be a genre of video game that is highly prized by both developers and players.

3.3 A Case for a New Model

As has been shown, the ludic genre of the CRPG has had a substantial and diverse history since its inception over forty years ago. Yet, the musical model began by *Ultima III* and refined by *Dragon Quest* is still being cited by scholars and commentators today as the defacto model that is applicable to the vast majority of CRPGs. This, as shown above, cannot be correct. The diversity of JRPGs in particular, do not easily align to the eight-cue model with its roots in western medieval high-fantasy that *Ultima III* and *Dragon Quest* made use

¹¹² Examples include Tifa fighting trident-carrying lizard creatures in a crop-top and braces, Cloud fighting giant robot creatures with a sword as big as he is and the aforementioned fight against a literal evil house.

of. Instead, JRPGs often mesh narrative genres together with numerous instances of illogicality as described above. Once again, as a reminder, these eight tracks are shown below:

- Overture (Opening)
- Castle
- Town
- Field
- Dungeon
- Battle
- Final Battle
- March (Ending)

These have already been compared against Chatman’s Components of a Narrative; however, we can refer to another industry professional for more contemporary titles of track types within video games. In Winifred Phillips’ chapter ‘Music Needs of the Game’ (Phillips, 2014, pp. 145 – 155), she states that video games in general have several different types. The most applicable to this study are:

- The Main Theme
- Action Tracks and Ambient Tracks
- Puzzle Tracks
- Scripted Sequences, Cut Scenes, Quick Time Events, and Cinematics

Again, links with Chatman’s narrative components can be seen. Whilst Phillips designates their job within the industry and what the development team would need them for, her categories fit quite neatly in Chatman’s model as shown in table 3.1:

Chatman’s “Narrative Component”	Phillips’ “Music Need”
Action	Action, Puzzle
Happening	Scripted Sequences, Cut Scenes, Quick Time Events, and Cinematics
Setting	Ambient Tracks

Table 3.1 – Chatman’s “Narrative Components” compared against Phillips’ “Music Needs”

These however, are for video games in general. If we are to relate this to CRPGs specifically, with their focus on story and all of its components – particularly JRPGs – then a modified model must be drawn. By doing so, future scholarship can build upon this proposed new template that incorporates CRPGs not just from before

the millennium, but those all the way up to present day. To that end, I propose four encompassing archetypes for CRPGs specifically. This is shown in table 3.2:

Proposed Track Archetype	Explanation	Chatman 'Component'	Phillips 'Need'
Action	<i>Anytime a player enters combat.</i>	Action	Action
Area	<i>Any music played when exploring or traversing an area.</i>	Setting	Ambient
Character	<i>Character themes or leitmotifs.</i>	Character	
Special	<i>Main theme, ending, music to accompany cutscenes, stingers.</i>	Happening	Scripted sequences, cut scenes, quick time events, cinematics

Table 3.2 – Proposed Track Types for CRPGs

Expanding on the definition of ambience in section 2.1.1, Phillips states that ambience will 'set the emotional atmosphere during lower energy periods in which the player is free to explore, engage in relatively safe activities, and interact with other characters' (Phillips, 2014, p. 151). However, for JRPGs in particular – with their focus on narrative and story – means that by combining interactions with characters as ambient and cross-referencing this with Eno's 'forgettable' part of we are suggesting that the characters themselves are not as important within the game's score. This is arguably the case with WRPGs.

As such, four track archetypes are stated. Nevertheless, as has been discussed, there is a distinct divide in CRPGs and for that reason an expansion of what sub-categories of music are found within each of these archetypes. These are the focus of the following two chapters where we consider the division between JRPGs and WRPGs and through these new archetypes, the differences in musical style can be mapped.

3.4 Conclusion

The next two chapters explore each of the two main forms of CRPG design and their music in further detail. Before that however, it is important to both restate and clarify what has not been shown within Chapters Two and Three. This proposed canonical history shows single-player fantasy computer role-playing games only. Multiple hugely-important and influential scores have been omitted due to not falling into the categorisation defined here. For future study, the following should be explored:

- MMORPGs: Online CRPGs such as *Everquest*, *World of Warcraft*, *Final Fantasy XI* and *XIV*, *Guild Wars* etcetera. have not been covered. These are vastly influential video games in general, particularly through social interaction and how their music design and implementation have influenced many other games.

- Other story genres: Those CRPGs that do not have a narrative structure setting of fantasy have also been omitted. Sci-fi CRPGs such as *Wasteland*, *Shadowrun*, *Deus Ex*, *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*, *Shin Megami Tensei Digital Devil Saga*, *Vampire: The Masquerade – Bloodlines*, *Fallout*, *Mass Effect*, *Nier: Automata* and *Cyberpunk 2077* amongst many others could be investigated beyond the scope of the present thesis. Likewise, games from other settings such as *Wild Arms* (set in the Wild-West) might be explored.

Nevertheless, I believe the above information paints a wide and chronological picture of the roughly 40-year history of CRPGs and their cultural and narrative influences in creating coherent scores of CRPGs that we have as we approach the end of the PlayStation 4/Xbox One generation as of November 2020. Patterns are starting to emerge that link back to the theories introduced in Chapter One, most notably those of narrative, expectation, aesthetics and nostalgia. Suits' definition of a game is easily applicable; a CRPG meets all of the demands of Suits' definition. Huron's expectation theory has now been engrained into CRPGs and video games as a whole since their inception and with a forty-year history, players and developers alike are constantly being influenced by an expectation of what should be there and how. For music, that is often condensed to style and timbre. Meanwhile, Kizzire's nostalgia theory works seamlessly with CRPGs: game series such as *Final Fantasy* and *Dragon Quest* from Japan, in addition to *The Elder Scrolls* and the licensed *Dungeons & Dragons* games from the West have created a history that players from one generation take into the next. As has been shown, there is a distinct desire for a return to the past with titles such as *Undertale*, *Octopath Traveler* and *Pillars of Eternity* and forthcoming titles such as *Baldur's Gate 3* and the remake of *Demon's Souls*. Additionally, this does not just stop at officially published games; mods such as *Skywind* (as explained above) are trying to bring together the old and contemporary and are creating new – if stylistically similar – music to the original to accompany it. Ivănescu's similar theory of nostalgia is also clearly applicable; new games – particularly JRPGs – relate to those of yesteryear by emphasising the undertones of a clear melody, varying styles and genres as Nishiki states for *Octopath Traveler*. Van Elferen's ALI model, also is essential fits perfectly within CRPGs. The time between the original and now in series such as *the Tales* series for example is significant impacting its affect. Musical literacy has been cultivated over four decades and with games such as *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* making significant use of interactivity both through adaptive music and its incorporation of leitmotifs across its score this theory also impacts the overall measure of coherency within a computer role-playing game's score.

Nevertheless, as has been discussed throughout these past two chapters, the model that has been presumed to be applicable to CRPGs scores – that of the eight-melody template introduced in *Ultima III* and refined in *Dragon Quest* cannot be said to be a template any longer. WRPGs have expanded upon it and JRPGs have often completely replaced it with their fusion of multiple narrative genres and the illogicality that this often brings with it. At the end of the following two chapters which mirror one another and expand upon the

cultural heritage that impacts both JRPGs and WRPGs respectively, I present new template models for the music found within these games: one for non-homogenous JRPGs and one for the homogenous WRPGs.

Appendices

- **Appendix 3.1** – Proposed correct transcription of the *Oblivion* main theme with Sweeney’s original for comparison.
- **Appendix 3.2** – Transcription of the *Pillars of Eternity* main theme by Justin Bell.
- **Appendix 3.3** – Transcription of “Aerith’s Theme – Home Again” from *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* by Nobuo Uematsu and arranged by Yoshinori Nakamura.

CHAPTER 4:

MUSIC IN SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY JRPGs

4.1 Background

‘Broadly speaking, there is an increasing domination of US and English language-based exportable cultural products, under the influence of multinational firms of US origin,’ write Yuko Aoyama and Hiro Izushi (2002, p. 423), before adding, ‘Japan’s video games therefore represent an exception to this trend in the western world... without Japanese firms such as Nintendo and Sony Computer Entertainment (SCE), [the video game industry] would not have amounted to more than just a passing fad’ (ibid, pp. 423 – 424).

As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, whilst CRPGs arose at a similar time both in the West and in Japan, their tone and gameplay quickly diverged into the JRPG and WRPG divide. To some game-critics and developers, these differences are so vast that there have been calls for a new term to be used instead of JRPG as Daniel Erikson – Writing Director at Bioware – argues:

You can put a 'J' in front of it, but it's not an RPG. You don't make any choices, you don't create a character, you don't live your character... I don't know what those are - adventure games maybe? But they're not RPG's (Goldman, 2010).

However, despite these comments, there seems to be little appetite for a change in name to the genre within the wider gaming community and as such the idea has not gained much traction.

In this chapter, the music of the JRPGs discussed during Chapters Two and Three are considered further in an aim to understand their inspirations and their cultural influences including manga and anime. By the end of this chapter, I propose a JRPG-specific model to the cues found in these games that was first introduced in section 3.3. By doing so, the differences between the music between JRPGs and WRPGs (discussed in Chapter Five) are further highlighted to provide an understanding of what makes a coherent JRPG musical score. To begin however, it is useful to expand on the general definition of a CRPG outlined in section 1.3.2 to understand what exactly makes a JRPG. Gibbons writes that:

unlike the more narratively homogenous Western RPGs, JRPGs commonly feature rapid shifts in tone between light-hearted humour, philosophical rumination, and melodramatic earnestness. Gameplay design is equally varied, typically offering players diversions from the core narrative in the form of mini-games (short games-within-games) such as racing simulations, casino games, card collecting, monster training, and so on (Gibbons, 2017, p. 417).

This ludic genre is well-known within the West even if its popularity has not reached the success of First-Person Shooters (FPS) - such as the *Call of Duty* series (Activision, 2003 -), Action/Adventure Games – such as the *Grand Theft Auto* series (Rockstar, 1997 -) or currently the Battle Royale genre – such as *Fortnite* (Epic Games, 2017 -). Gibbons’ description of what a JRPG entails is suitably supported by fellow scholars, composers and game critics. Phillips writes, ‘For Northeast Asian RPGs... these games display a brighter and more colourful atmosphere and the storyline often restricts the player from going anywhere, directing the path of the characters toward locations that will figure in the advancement of the plot’ (Phillips, 2014, p. 88).

4.2 Advancing the Story

As discussed in Chapter One, Chatman’s Model of the Components of a Narrative suggests that the game’s story is subdivided into ‘events’ (the actions and happenings of the plot) and ‘existents’ (the characters and setting(s) of the world). From this we can use Chatman’s model in this chapter to investigate further how the music of JRPGs is constructed particularly in reference to the thesis’ framework; narrative and culture.

4.2.1 Narrative Elements

As early as Barton’s Golden Age Part I, fantasy JRPGs have differed in their narrative from Western games – and indeed most Western fantasy fiction. Fantasy found in these games is one that is not limited by the genre conventions usually found with high fantasy in the west. Whilst WRPGs and their respective narrative will be discussed in the next chapter it is necessary to outline the narrative elements of JRPGs and similar media here.

Consider the tropes of the most common forms of genre fiction found in the West:

- **Fantasy:**

Gabrielle Lissauer – author of the book “The Tropes of Fantasy Fiction” – writes that fantasy fiction will generally have; a hero, an anti-hero, a mentor, a love interest, magical races, mysterious kingdoms, prophecies, secret societies, magic and a quest (Lissauer, 2014, pp. 12 – 13). She goes onto write, ‘fantasy [is] the oldest form of storytelling known to man... it most certainly encompasses all of mythology and many classical texts.’

- **Science-Fiction:**

Adam Roberts – author of the book “Science Fiction” – writes that science-fiction will generally have at least one of the following; spaceships and interplanetary/stellar travel, aliens, mechanical robots, genetic engineering, computers, virtual reality, time travel, alternative history, futuristic utopias/dystopias (Roberts, 2000, p. 12).

- **Horror:**

Gina Wisker writes; ‘Horror in one form or other is at least as old as storytelling itself and appears in a wide range of written, oral, filmic, and other forms. It is an essential troubling accompaniment to

the complacencies and mundanity of the everyday, reminding us that behind artifices of comfort and rules, order and stability, wholeness and righteousness, lies the flip sides of these: discomfort, terror, violence, disgust’ (Wisker, 2012). To this, Noel Carroll adds that ‘horror thrives above all as a narrative form’ (Carroll, 2003, p. 34) which of course compliments the CRPG.

It is of interest therefore that not only are there examples of JRPGs that exist in each of these genres, but also JRPGs which – though fantasy as their main narrative genre – make use of sci-fi, horror and more within their worlds. Games such as *Final Fantasy IX* have medieval-inspired kingdoms where kings and queens have airships. Dark foreboding graveyards and tombs containing monsters that prey on primal instincts is found in games such as *Shadow Hearts* (Sacnoth, 2001). Meanwhile, time-travel through magical portals to worlds over-run by rogue A.I. occur in *Final Fantasy XIII-2*. These are all examples of where the tropes of the main narrative genre have been blurred creating a fantastical narrative that does not necessarily meet the usual expectations of the same genre in the West.

The above three genres of fiction (fantasy, sci-fi and horror) are often cited in a variety of Japanese cultural studies when it comes to the fantastical. Annalee Newitz (1995), Philip Brophy (2000), Kenneth Alan Adams and Lester Jr. Hill (1991) for instance all examine themes in a variety of Japanese media and list these genres of fiction as being used across the fantastical in Japan. For Western audiences, science-fiction in combination with fantasy is a fusion seldom found, yet in Japan this is commonplace. Consider, *Godzilla*, *Dragonball Z* or *Akira* – all of these famous Japanese film and television series combine the fantasy of magic and ancient monsters with the technology of either the present or the future. Other newer examples include the manga and anime *Fairy Tail*, the media franchise *Pokémon* and many entries in the *Final Fantasy* series (see above). With these now defined, we can begin to explore how they are utilised within CRPGs and how they affect the music heard within them.

4.2.2 The Use of the Cutscene

Amongst the many ways that the narrative is presented within video games – and particularly the CRPG – is the use of cutscenes. A more formal definition of a cutscene than the one outlined in section 1.5.1 is offered by Jason Thompson where he writes that a cutscene ‘employs the cinematic techniques of camera position, *mise en scène*, and editing to construct a spatiotemporal unit, often freighted with narrative, dramatic, or spectacular significance’ (Thompson, 2013, p. 108). JRPGs – particularly since *Final Fantasy VII* – have begun to use ever more elaborate cutscenes within the course of their narrative, often investing a huge amount of resources to their creation with Phillips writing that ‘at the height of their popularity, cinematics had become splashy, expensive mini-movies that told gripping stories with extravagant visual effects’ (Phillips, 2014, p. 153). Meanwhile, Gibbons writes that:

[JRPGs] depend heavily on the player’s emotional investment in the fates of the characters and on the narrative arc as a whole—disengaged players are unlikely to devote the dozens of hours

necessary to complete a typical JRPG. Not surprisingly, in JRPGs the music is most responsive to on-screen developments... during non-interactive cut scenes, in which the plot is advanced (Gibbons, 2017, p. 442).

If the plot and length of the cutscene is fixed, then the composer can tailor the required musical cue to a much higher degree than even with the most sophisticated of adaptive music systems. As such, the style of this composition is highly reminiscent of linear film-scoring as explained by Winifred Phillips:

Linear music is powerful – it can establish empathy, enhance suspense, and deliver the player into explosive moments of drama. It enhances the impression that our journey in the game is leading somewhere worthwhile, that in playing the game we are also writing our own story... Because we are so personally invested in these stories, their endings can be very affecting, and these emotions can help to elevate video games above the status of a simple pastime and into the realm of art... For all of these reasons, linear music will always be tremendously important to the creation of a strong video game score (Phillips, 2014, p. 183).

Whilst it makes sense to employ standard film-music techniques to these cutscenes, to merely pass over them without looking at the subtle differences between them and other linear pieces of media would be an oversight. The reasons behind this are two-fold:

1. Music that has been looped previously is sometimes edited to be used in cutscenes.
2. Cutscenes in JRPGs have been described as a 'reward' (Hooper, 2018, p. 118) for completing a stage, area or aspect to the gameplay. This provides players with certainly a different – and arguably stronger – emotional connection with the story than if it were represented purely as a film.

Further information concerning the use of the cutscene is described in section 4.3.2. Nevertheless, although the likes of Phillips and Hooper touch on why the music for JRPGs remains so popular, there is still work to be done upon this subject. To do so, we must take a step back and ask first as to whom this genre of video game might appeal to.

4.3 A Non-Homogenous Musical Style

4.3.1 Player Studies

In her monograph, Phillips brings together two particular studies in an attempt to connect musical style to ludic genre. The first of these, is the 2006 study by Chris Bateman and Richard Boon who aimed to create a model of demographic game design. The results suggested that there were four distinct gaming types to which Bateman and Boon gave names; *Conquerors, Managers, Wanderers and Participants*:

- Conquerors: A type of player unwavering in their determination to beat the game.
- Managers: A type of player determined to master the game and all of its intrinsic skills.
- Wanderers: A type of player wishing to explore a highly immersive environment
- Participant: A type of player wishing to interact with other people as well as compelling characters within a story.

(Bateman & Boon, 2006, p. 55)

The second study that Phillips draws attention to was a mid-2000s study led by Marc Delsing into adolescents' music preferences and personality characteristics (Delsing et al., 2008). Within this study, they showcased their findings that the students' musical tastes fell into four discrete dimensions: Rock, Elite, Urban and Pop/Dance based on differing personality traits. Table 4.1 below shows the styles of music that fit into each of the proposed dimensions:

Dimension	Musical Style
Rock	Heavy Metal
	Punk
	Gothic/Wave
	Rock
Elite	Jazz
	Classical
	Gospel
Urban	Hip-hop/Rap
	Soul/R&B
Pop/Dance	Trance/Techno
	Top 40/Charts

Table 4.1 – The proposed ‘dimensions’ by Delsing et al., (2008. p. 116) with their corresponding musical styles

Whilst the research paper records the results of a large sample size of 2,334 adolescents aged between 12 and 19, there are some immediately apparent issues¹¹³ with the researcher's stylistic categories. For instance, they make only a passing reference to the musical styles that they attempt to distil, calling them 'clear and interpretable' (ibid, p. 115). There are after all, many crossovers between these styles, with pop and rock often being amalgamated into one genre whilst Delsing et al. separate them. Jazz fusion combines jazz with

¹¹³ There is also something to be said about the arguably controversial term 'elite' being used as the name of a dimension, however this is a discussion to be had outside of this thesis.

rock elements together again blurring the lines between the Rock dimension and the Elite. Similar confusion is also found in contemporary charts (at the time of writing) that regularly include rap and hip-hop music. Delsing et al. then use their discussion section to connect their dimensions with personality type creating some controversial results. A negative association with extroversion was linked to Rock – which is partly in contrast to how Phillips states it as ‘introversion’ (Phillips, 2014, p. 83). Delsing et al. do not discuss this further, so I suggest an alternative take to Phillips. For these musical styles that fit into the Rock dimension, they are typically favoured by niche groups. Mike Savage for instance writes that ‘heavy metal is avoided by all but “hard-core” fans’¹¹⁴ (2011, p. 161), who would typically interact (and thus perhaps be extrovert) with each other, but perhaps not people of a differing musical persuasion. Meanwhile, returning to Delsing et al., they suggest that extroversion in itself is linked to Urban and Pop/Dance music. Those that were more likely to embrace new experiences enjoyed both Rock and Elite music and those that were typically inclined to plan ahead predominantly the Elite. Additionally, those that were more likely to be empathetic in their actions enjoyed the widest range including Elite, Pop/Dance and Urban.

Just as Phillips does, it is now possible to collate the two studies. It is not controversial to suggest that any form of RPG will draw interest from the Conqueror, as there are challenges in completing the variety of quests and side quests that the game has to offer. This group of players are likely to prefer that of Elite and Rock styles of music. But where WRPGs and JRPGs arguably diverge is in the attraction of the Participant – these are players who sympathise with the game’s characters and enjoy discovering how any one particular character might progress in the game. Of course, there are slight exceptions to this blanket statement. The multi-party set-up of several of BioWare’s CRPGs for example bring together numerous characters of various races, backgrounds and cultures. Nevertheless, they are arguably relegated to side-characters in comparison to the player’s main avatar, who leads the story. Meanwhile, for JRPGs, the player is often required to play as alternate characters to the main protagonist – for example in *Final Fantasy VII: Remake*, there are multiple occasions where the player is tasked with playing as Aerith or Tifa. As such, a Participant is likely to favour a JRPG much more and with the already discussed use of the character theme much more prevalent in JRPGs, this undoubtedly leads to a greater involvement in the relationship to characters.

Phillips goes on to explain that ‘RPGs of Northeast Asia will alternate orchestral and rock tracks with such styles as techno (*The World Ends with You*), light retro-pop (*Xenoblade Chronicles*), and Top-40 style ballads (*NieR*). While it is clear that both Western and Eastern RPGs are featuring music that appeals strongly to their primary audiences of Conquerors, the Eastern RPGs have put forward musical styles that the more musically eclectic Participants may also appreciate’ (ibid, p. 88).

¹¹⁴ There is perhaps a certain paradox here, where ‘hard-core’ fans are by necessity a subset of all fans, thus it stands to reason that not all fans can be ‘hard-core’ fans. To resolve this, it could be argued that Savage is discussing heavy metal as a sub-genre of rock music, meaning that heavy metal fans are ‘hard-core’ rock fans.

Gibbons reinforces Phillips point, focusing his writing upon the stylistic variants that JRPGs have to offer:

Japanese composers often pull from a larger and considerably more varied stylistic pool, encompassing classical and popular music as well as anime scores. These varied soundscapes are both a result of the increasing divergence in tone and gameplay between the two traditions and, from the player's perspective, a crucial source of information about which type of game experience to expect (Gibbons, 2017, p. 418).

Returning to the canonical study shown in Chapters Two and Three, it is clear that JRPGs – particularly since *Final Fantasy V* make use of 'varied stylistic pool'. Biographers have observed this for many years when writing about Japanese composers. Take Nobuo Uematsu for instance. As is shown, his compositional output is prolific with many of the games that he has composed for coming with multi-CD soundtracks, none of which can truly be argued as being stylistically homogenous. Angelica Frey of CMuse writes that Uematsu has a 'diverse style in his compositions: some pieces are symphonic, other are downright heavy metal, others have a new age influence, others sport techno-electronic characteristics' (Frey, 2015). Uematsu has revealed in several interviews that he enjoys Celtic and Irish music and is inspired by Elton John, The Beatles, Lake and Palmer and Simon and Garfunkel (ibid). Phillips agrees; 'In Nobuo Uematsu's *Final Fantasy VII* soundtrack, the bulk of the music ranges from low-keyed atmosphere to end-of-the-world action' (Phillips, 2014, p. 106). Melanie Fritsch adds a more succinct analysis; 'Uematsu's formula for success was combining eastern and western styles of instrumental music, and this formula truly worked' (Fritsch, 2013, p. 20). Similarly, Motoi Sakuraba – an even more prolific composer than Uematsu in terms of the number of soundtracks that he had composed for – shares a similarly varied compositional output. Sebastian Urrea of *Original Sound Version* writes that 'progressive rock is probably his most obvious influence, but there are also elements of Jazz, Classical, and other styles in his compositions' (Urrea, 2015). Chris Greening of the website *Video Game Music Online (VGMO)* also references Sakuraba's stylistic heterogeneity by stating that his compositions tend to be 'unbound by form' (Greening, 2013b) and thus suggesting that Sakuraba deviates somewhat from the norm.

Both composers are suitably noted by critics and scholars alike for their compositional output but also their remarkable breadth in scope when it comes to stylistic writing for their respective games. Gibbons reinforces these points on the aspects of variety when he writes:

JRPGs do share many similarities with traditional media, most prominently anime. Though anime began decades earlier, both it and video games grew dramatically in exposure and popularity in the 1980s, and the two media were (and are) mutually influential in both visual style and narrative content (Gibbons, 2017, p. 417).

Yet the question remains as to why JRPGs have this variety of musical styles? What is it about this particular ludic-genre that allows this freedom but also this acceptance that music in these games will be eclectic? Uematsu has his thoughts on this:

With RPGs you can add just about any type of music. For example, you can add grandiose, movie-style music with a sense of openness, you can add cute music for cute characters, and you can add something like progressive rock to battle scenes. In that sense my music is really . . . Well, I'm an omnivore, so I like variety in music, so in that sense, I think RPGs are a genre that's really suited to me (Uematsu, 2014).

4.3.2 A Musical Parallel

Before continuing onto the biggest forms of cultural influence that affect JRPGs, an interesting parallel can be drawn to another form of multimedia; that of musical theatre. In Joan Baxter's preface to her book, she writes 'there is something special, something magic, about musicals. They are a unique form of entertainment, romantic and funny and exhilarating. The combination of words, music, color and motion appeals to the ear and eye, and at its best fully involves the audience' (Baxter, 2020, p. 7). The parallels with CRPGs – and arguably particularly JRPGs – are readily apparent. Phillips has already been referenced as stating that JRPGs are 'colourful', the scenes described throughout Chapters Two and Three suggest a combination of romance and exhilaration, (motion) cutscenes advance the story and the audience is involved through literally playing the game. Other links are also apparent. As has been discussed in both this chapter and Chapter Two and Three, JRPGs tend to advance the story through cutscenes, contain an eclectic soundtrack which focuses on distinctive thematic and melodic material and places the player within a story rather than allowing free-reign over their character's destiny. In Per Krogh Hansen's chapter on film musicals, he writes that '[the musical's] demand for multimodal expression and eclectic complexity brings together diverse elements from both pop-culture and fine arts' (Hansen, 2010). This is undoubtedly true of the JRPG score; bringing together Delsing's Elite dimension of orchestral music with both Rock (*Final Fantasy X*) and Pop/Dance (*Phantasy Star/Lunar 2*). Leitmotifs to represent characters, objects and places are often commonplace.

So too however, is the attitude of earlier musicals and earlier CRPGs. Hansen continues; 'but in general the conviction of the musical-creators and performers seems to have been that the story is only there as an excuse; as a loose frame for the artistry and imagery of the show' (Hansen, 2010). Certainly, in both the early JRPGs and WRPGs, this statement is very apt. The 'story' and its respective components described by Chatman were barely acknowledged – in the original *Final Fantasy* for instance, the characters did not have names and instead were referenced as a group of four as "The Warriors of Light". Story was the weak framing device used to support the objective of levelling up the characters in an attempt to defeat the final boss. Yet, as game narrative became more complex, story – particularly in JRPGs – became the allure. In their paper "Textuality in Video Games", Diane Carr (et. al, 2003, p. 148) they recorded players 'unhesitatingly announce that the story is the great lure in the Final Fantasy games; that these games are "like movies" that you can explore.' This change in the importance of story found within JRPGs is similar to what happened in musical theatre during the 1940s. As Larry A. Brown writes: 'previously lyricists and composers wrote songs, but now

they became dramatists, using songs to develop character and advance the plot. Rodgers and Hammerstein abandoned the sure-bet formulas of their day, slapstick comedy and chorus lines of scantily clad females. All elements in the musical now had to have a dramatic function' (Brown, 2019). Here we see again, a distinct parallel with JRPGs; where – like with musicals – story was a by-product, now it was pushed front and centre with the cutscene. Brown continues: 'songs should express the deepest thoughts and feelings of the characters at that moment'. Again, parallels can be drawn between the often-intimate scenes found in JRPGs with music to match. Take for example, the scene in *Final Fantasy X* where Yuna and Tidus kiss for the first time. A still image take from the beginning of the scene is shown below in Fig. 4.1:



Fig. 4.1 – The opening of the kissing scene found in *Final Fantasy X*.

In this scene – which lasts over eleven minutes and is a combination of in-engine graphics and a FMV – Yuna opens up to the protagonist Tidus (seen at the back of the screenshot) expressing her fears and worries about the pilgrimage that she must take which will claim her life. There are two pieces of music heard during this scene, one is Yuna's character theme – played using its traditional instrumentation – and the second is the game's theme song – 'Suteki Da Ne'. The lyrics are both a reflection of the moonlit lake the two characters are standing in and also a metaphor to Tidus' character who as discussed in section 1.5.1 is but a dream. This is not a one-off example. Many *Final Fantasy* games since *Final Fantasy VIII* for example have made use of songs during relatively intimate story moments linking character and their thoughts and feelings. So too have others including: 'Wind's Nocturne' from *Lunar Silver Star Story*, 'My Tales' from *Tales of Legendia*, 'Succeeded Wish' from *Valkyria Chronicles* or 'The Flying One' from *The Last Story* which all utilise these songs during intimate cutscenes.

To conclude this section, a quotation by George Rodosthenous can be used as a parallel between musical theatre and JRPGs. In an interview with Lucy Hind, he states that 'the genre of the Hollywood musical is

defined by shifts between plot and number, narrative and spectacle' (Rodosthenous, 2020, p. 57). In turn, we can paraphrase so it becomes: the genre of the JRPG is defined by shifts between gameplay and cutscene, interactivity and story progression. For these cutscenes however, one only has to look at Japan's two other biggest cultural exports to find the influences behind the unique stories found in JRPGs which segues neatly into the next section of this chapter.

4.4 Cultural Influence

'If you like anime, you'll probably enjoy JRPGs', so says Lindsey Weedston – a freelance writer for the gaming website *Cheat Code Central* (2011). This general idea has not gone unnoticed by academics – William Gibbons' earlier reference to anime is pertinent and Mark MacWilliams writes in the introduction to his edited book *Japanese Visual Culture* that 'manga and anime share a mixed or hybrid nature. First, they both blend the visual and the verbal into a unified whole... Second, both are cultural hybrids originating from Japan's contact with the modern West' (MacWilliams, 2014, p.6). With this in mind, scholars have built upon this; Izushi & Aoyama suggest that 'Japan's video game industry drew artistic creativity from its already well-developed cartoons and animation film industry. Cartoons and animation films have pervasive influence upon Japan's culture and society, far greater in comparison to American and European counterparts' (Izushi & Aoyama, 2006, p. 1847). To fully understand anime's impact upon video games however, it is necessary to understand anime's own origins – that of Japanese manga. Jennifer Prough adds in her summary to her book "Straight from the Heart" that 'manga is the backbone of Japanese popular culture, influencing everything from television, movies, and video games to novels, art, and theatre' (Prough, 2011).

4.4.1 Manga

Manga is the Japanese equivalent of comic-books or graphic-novels. Since its inception, manga has come to incorporate numerous art styles that have evolved over time. Like any visual art, literature or entertainment, it does not stand alone; instead, it reflects, exaggerates, satirises and highlights social factors of its culture, including – but not limited to – history, politics, relationships, sex, education and its own demographics. '*Manga* thus reflects the reality of Japanese society, along with the myths, beliefs, rituals, tradition, fantasies and Japanese way of life... it also depicts other social phenomena, such as social order and hierarchy, sexism, racism, ageism, classism' (Ito, 2005, p. 456). Ito is not the only scholar to outline manga's importance on Japanese popular culture. MacWilliams adds; 'reading manga and watching anime is a significant part of daily life for millions of Japanese. Japan's literacy, newspaper circulation and TV viewing rates are among the world's highest, and its mass media creates an environment this is replete with stories' (MacWilliams, 2014, p. 3).

Modern Japanese manga began to grow in popularity in the 1920s and 30s. Before this, there were more satirical cartoons which often featuring displays of freedom of speech against governments and official figures that could not be said aloud. In contrast, in the 1920s and 30s, multiple manga artists – including

established figures in the field such as Rakuten Kitazawa and Ippei Okamoto – travelled to the United States and other countries. At the time, the US had newspapers such as *The New World* – one of the first to print in colour – which featured serial comic strips within them. Through these travels, manga began to be incorporated into Japanese newspapers, beginning with Kitazawa's Japanese version of "Yellow Kid" in the *Jiji Shimpō* newspaper's Sunday edition; a serial story aimed more towards children. This edition was designed so that all the members of a family could enjoy it and as a result led to an ever greater of exposure to manga of both Kitazawa and his contemporaries.

As stated above, manga reflects Japanese society, and this was no exception when the Japanese went to war with the United States by attacking Pearl Harbour in 1941. Manga artists were used to create various forms of propaganda for the Japanese war effort – positive pieces of art for the local populace and demoralising leaflets to be dropped over enemy lines. After the war however, Japanese society faced uncertainty. The country had been decimated by battle and the populace craved entertainment. 'Manga was easily affordable, and the newly emerging civil society after the unconditional surrender and the seven-year US occupation provided an abundance of topics for satire' (Ito, 2005). This was particularly true of the country's young people and in the 1950s, children's manga started to grow in popularity. Today's manga style arguably derives from the artwork of Osamu Tezuka (1926 – 1989) – a famous cartoonist in Japan who revolutionised the art-style through his use of cinematic techniques such as close-ups and different angles (John, 2013). Additionally, American cartoons of the time – including Blondie, Popeye and Superman – were being translated into Japanese and shown to Japanese audiences leading many to assimilate stories of numerous cultural origins. Over the next few decades, a sales boom in manga occurred. Gradually different sections of the market were accommodated for, beginning with *Gekiga* – these were 'longer stories featuring not magical heroes but everyday adult characters in action-packed stories aimed at teenagers and strongly influenced by film noir and Japanese film makers such as Akira Kurosawa and Yasujiro Ozu' (Cartoon Museum, 2015). Next came Shonen Magajin – designed for young males – before Shōjo manga – its counterpart designed for young females. Numerous other manga publications began from this point onwards, accommodating many tastes and often breaking cultural taboos (Kinsella, 1996, p. 106).

The first independent manga stand was displayed at the Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany in 2002. This was another important milestone for manga internationally – the Frankfurt Book Fair is one of the oldest and largest book fairs, dealing with many genres of books. Understandably with such events, the Japanese government began to take more notice of manga as it made inlays into other cultures. In 2007, 'Tokyo established the International Manga Award and the First International Manga Award Executive who contribute to the promotion of *manga* abroad' (Lam, 2007, p. 356); a formal acknowledgement of manga's wide reach and its impact upon cultures other than its own.

From the information listed above, it is obvious that manga today draws upon a huge array of topics for its narrative. From adult topics through to scenes for children, from the mundane to the supernatural, manga

has an international appeal. Its development and origins are undoubtedly Japanese but to call it Japanese in its entirety is a misnomer. For manga has had an international cultural impact upon it; most notably in the early and mid-20th Century from the United States. Manga artists travelled to America and developed ideas to bring back to Japan. After the Japanese defeat in World War 2, Japanese audiences looked for escapism and US comics were translated into Japanese. The current state of manga can only be argued to be a melting pot of ideas that not only cater to a domestic audience, but also to an international one as well. This also links to the JRPG. As shown in Chapters Two and Three, the JRPG did not develop in isolation. Instead, it has looked to a variety of other cultures to assimilate ideas from, just as manga had done before it. With that international amalgamation of ideas, it is not surprising that international audiences have been influenced by another form of Japanese culture.

4.4.2 Anime and its Music

Unsurprisingly, over time, the desire for manga to be animated brought about anime – or Japanese animation; the Japanese equivalent of Western cartoons. It must be noted, that there is much analysis on whether anime is a particular subgenre of Japanese animation or a term for the genre as a whole (Clements, 2013, p. 2), however, for the benefits of this thesis, anime will be defined as Japanese animation in the art style of mainstream manga.

Yet, whilst cartoons – and to a certain extent comics – in the West have somewhat of a childish stigma attached to them (though there are notable exceptions, for example *The Simpsons*, *Family Guy*, *BoJack Horseman*, *Disenchantment* among others), anime in Japan is enjoyed by both adults and children alike through a huge variety of stories of varying maturity levels. Fred Patten – author of multiple essays concerning Japanese manga and anime – concurs:

Cartoons themselves are not treated as seriously in America as in Japan, where many animated science fiction adventure series appear on prime-time television alongside the live-action detective programs and adult soap operas, where they are directed toward a more mature audience with more mature themes (Patten, 2004, p. 165).

In Japan ‘manga are the source for over 90 percent of anime’ (Trautlein, 2006) showing the almost universal relationship between the two forms of Japanese popular media. Susan Napier agrees, stating that anime is ‘truly a mainstream pop cultural phenomenon’ (Napier, 2016, p. 7) with Damon Darlin adding that it is ‘a window on Japanese society... revealing [the] fears and fantasies of the Japanese’ (Darlin 1987). The stories within manga as explained above could take on any number of themes – from science fiction to fantasy, romance to school life, horror to pirates; there is a story for practically every genre of fiction. With that, came certain stereotypes: first on the page in terms of visuals and written language and later on the screen through the addition of music and other audio-visual elements. Sean Leonard suggests that ‘the answer lies in the international pull, not push, of anime to other nations’ shores through the energies of

enthusiastic fans’ (Leonard, 2005, p. 282). Dr Minako O’Hagan agrees, writing that ‘examples of the influence of manga and anime range from Hollywood films such as *The Matrix* and *Kill Bill* to a UK publisher’s recent launch of a *Manga Shakespeare* series turning *Romeo and Juliet* into a contemporary story set in Japan with Japanese characters depicted in a distinctive manga style... Similarly, the popularity of Japanese video games has long ago crossed the national border to produce best-selling games in the global market’ (O’Hagan, 2007, p. 242).

With the introduction of anime, artists of manga could move from one art form to another. Anime also brought about other creative positions, not least that of the composer of the anime’s soundtrack. Indeed, ‘the sharing of artistic talent between cartoon/animation films and video games in Japan has led to a number of common features that can be observed between the two forms of art. For example, many in the video game industry refer to their interest in cartoon/animation films as being the primary motivating factor for pursuing current occupation’ (Izushi & Aoyama, 2006, p. 1848). Composers too, were drawn from other walks of life – with such growth in this sector, so many stories occupying so many genres of fiction needed scores written. Stereotypes that once existed purely visually now arose sonically. This was especially true of the anime whose stories involved things not native to Japan, where composers would look outside of their native borders to combine the foreign with the native.

Over the course of the history of anime, an interesting evolution has occurred in the scoring of the music. In the early days of music for anime, the production model was such that composers would write the music prior to animation on what is known as an “image album” which would then be added in later in an asynchronous manner. Since these early days where directors would sometimes use their composer’s work as inspiration in the creation of the actual film, American influence has meant that anime has gently drifted towards a more Hollywood way of scoring and thus a more synchronised. To understand this evolution – from where it started to today – it is once again useful to track the history of music used within anime. This is particularly important given Dennis Redmond’s writing on the subject:

The field of televised Japanese animation, popularly known as “anime” (a word derived from the French term for animation), has always led a curious double life. While anime is often considered to be the quintessential expression of Japanese culture, its greatest documents are scandalously un-Japanese... [it] is the purest product of the multinational era (Redmond, 2007, p. 183).

Scoring for anime – unsurprisingly – has some of its roots in Japanese cinema.¹¹⁵ Unlike in the US, the adoption of sound in film was not as fast in Japan. This was in part due to the *benshi* – the professional narrators of silent films. These silent films were theatrical events and the *benshi* often had backgrounds in professional theatre. Alongside live musical accompaniment from instruments such as the shakuhachi,

¹¹⁵ Although as Redmond’s above quote suggests, anime scoring also borrows heavily from the West as will be explained throughout the course of this section.

shamisen, violin and drums – a typical combination (Roedder, 2013, p. 19) – the benshi would provide all the narration in the film, speaking in place of the intertitles. This perhaps explains the use of the “image album” mentioned above. This perhaps also explains the more accepted use of silence in Japanese films and anime in comparison to those of American film (ibid). As such, both music and silence in earlier Japanese cinema was there to provide an overall feeling or mood to the scene and this was how anime began.

The historian Nobuyuki Tsugata (2011, p. 57)¹¹⁶ identifies three main epochs of anime where there were sudden spikes in its popularity:

1. *Astro Boy* and its influence, 1963 –
2. *Space Cruiser Yamato*, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, and their influences, 1974 – and 1984 –
3. *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *Princess Mononoke* and their influences, 1995 – and 1997 –

Just as Matt Barton split his history of CRPGs into different periods, the epochs listed by Tsugata do allow for a clear segmentation of the history of music in anime based on other related studies. As such, the information below details the music of influential anime films and series and highlights their links to the music of JRPGs. As will become obvious, Tsugata’s epochs of the modern anime begin before the advent of the JRPG and thus will undoubtedly have had an impact upon the composers that would later score for these games.

1. *Astro Boy* and its influences, 1963 -

Astro Boy (dir. Osamu Tezuka, 1963) – known in Japan as *Tetsuwan Atomu* (or *Mighty Atom*) – is notable for being the first Japanese animated television series to be broadcasted in America and also arguably the starting point of anime as it known today (Schodt, 2011, p.ix; Steinberg, 2006, p. 191). A science-fiction plot about a robot fashioned in the image of a young boy who fights evil, meant that it was extremely popular with younger viewers. Its appeal was not limited to Japan; NBC Films in America noticed the show’s popularity as well as its low production costs. They acquired copies of the anime, dubbed it for an American audience and found that like with Japan, ‘it proved to be popular among its young viewers’ (Marcovitz, 2008, p. 23) and so began importing other shows, such as *Kimba the White Lion* (dir. Nagashima et. al, 1965 - 67) and *Speed Racer* (dir. Hara et. al, 1967 - 68), (ibid, p. 30). A still image of *Astro Boy* – taken from the opening titles – is shown below in Fig. 4.2:

¹¹⁶ This is also described in the more accessible Jonathon Clements 2013 book.



Fig. 4.2 – A still image from the opening titles to *Astro Boy*

Astro Boy's musical score was by Tatsuo Takai. Little scholarly information exists on Takai, other than that of him being the composer to *Astro Boy*. To expand upon the scholarly literature surrounding his work however, let us examine the music for the anime. Its opening and ending themes are influenced by military marches in addition to several other cues that appear during the series. It is scored for orchestra, and many of the tracks have vocal parts within them. Like with many cartoons, but particularly with anime, the series progressed through multiple different storylines; many of which were situated in different locations requiring different pastiches on notable pre-existing musical themes. Fred Patten concurs:

There were records of animated cartoon music in Japan almost from the earliest days of Japanese TV cartoons, which began in January 1963 with Mighty Atom (*Astro Boy* in America). But for the fifteen years following that, Japanese cartoon music was produced on children's records only... most of these cartoon TV programs and movies featured fast-paced fantastic or science fictional stories, and the music was light and bouncy to match. A few cartoons used music composed in traditional Asian patterns; others used themes reminiscent of the Japanese military marches of World War II. But most featured modernized, Westernized tunes. Many gave the impression that their composers were having fun trying to write in popular American rhythms (Patten, 2004, p. 154).

As anime continued to develop, bringing technological advancements such as colour and better animation, it was inevitable that both stories and the music that accompanied them would do so as well. According to Gilles Poitras, 'music became a significant part of anime the industry in the late 1970s' (Poitras, 2014, p. 52), partly down to an American influence – that of the music to *Star Wars*.¹¹⁷ Patten writes, 'one of the merchandising hits of *Star Wars* was the symphonic suite arrangement of its John Williams music, in a

¹¹⁷ Interestingly, George Lucas has admitted to being heavily influenced by the Japanese film *The Hidden Fortress* (dir. Kurosawa, 1958); particularly in focusing on two of the film's weakest characters – R2D2 and C3PO (Kaminski, 2007, p. 314). The original plot for *Star Wars* featured a very similar plot to *The Hidden Fortress*, which was then used for *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace* (dir. Lucas, 1999).

serious and sophisticated album rather than a juvenile SF movie-music package. The Japanese quickly followed suit' (2004, p. 157). This American cultural influence provided a turning point for music in anime; no longer was this just a by-product of a cartoon – instead more attention to detail was lavished not just on the music itself, but how fans of anime and collectors of soundtracks received the music.

In the late 1970s, companies began to release symphonic arrangements of soundtracks. The success of single-program soundtracks rather than children's medley albums led to an increased emphasis on good music that could also be sold as recordings. Eventually it became common for a significant amount of high-quality original music to be included in a series; in fact, some television shows included so many songs and tunes that most were only heard once in the series (Poitras, 2014, p. 52).

This is particularly notable – as outlined in Chapter Two, the first Japanese CRPGs were developed in the early 1980s. For one of Japan's most notable forms of media having such lavish attention on its musical score, this would inevitably seep into JRPGs as they began to increase in popularity with a case in point being Koichi Sugiyama's score for *Dragon Quest* which is something further explored in Chapter Six. Meanwhile, the music of one other animated series should be noted here: *Skyers 5*, a sci-fi action series with narrative links to old western films. This was a series by Tele-Cartoon Japan and consisted of only twelve episodes running from October 4 – December 27, 1967. The main theme however, was composed by Koichi Sugiyama as his first animated feature – a piece reminiscent of themes from various Western sci-fi shows such as *Supercar* (Anderson/Hill, 1962) with its orchestral foundations of strings and brass combined with drum kit, electric guitar and voice. That Sugiyama would go on to become one of the most critically and commercially successful composers for JRPGs when starting in anime further cements the link between music for anime and music for JRPGs.

2. Space Cruiser Yamato, Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind, and their influences, 1974 – and 1984 –

In 1974 *Space Cruiser Yamato*¹¹⁸ (dir. Leiji Matsumoto) was released – a still image from the opening titles is shown below in Fig. 4.3. This science fiction anime series tells the story of Susumu Kodai and a crew of people on war-ravaged Earth, tasked with going into space on the spaceship Yamato to search for the planet Iscandar. Here they are to find a device that will enable humanity to reverse the effects of the radiation that is driving humanity to extinction. As with *Astro Boy*, its importance in the history of anime cannot be understated. Not only was this the first anime series or movie to win the Seiun Award – a Japanese Science-Fiction award – it has been suggested that it was a significant influence in later well-known manga/anime works such as *Mobile Suit Gundam* (dir. Yoshiyuki Tomino, 1979), *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (dir. Hideaki Anno, 1995) and even the video game *Space Invaders* (Murakami, 2005, p. 88; Kohler, 2016, p. 19). The music of

¹¹⁸ *Space Battleship Yamato* in Japan.

the television series in addition to the films and original video animation (OVA) was by Hiroshi Miyagawa. Until his death in 2006, Miyagawa was credited with being the composer for over 40 soundtracks in addition to being an award-winning pop music composer. His musical style is eclectic, combining jazz, pop, and classical pastiches into a soundtrack that made a definitive mark on the industry. As suggested in section 4.2.1, this corresponds with Uematsu's 'omnivore' remark and arguably reinforces the notion that this musical background stylistic diversity is amongst the most prevalent of factors that leads to the diversity that is heard in anime and video game musical score design. Miyagawa is not alone in this stylistic variety with other films of the time showing this stylistic variety. Take for example Nozomi Aoki – composer of the anime *Galaxy Express 999*. He created a musical score which married the lush romanticism of composers such as Riz Ortolani or John Barry, alongside adaptations and arrangements of Western Classical pieces such as Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*¹¹⁹ and comedic cues heard in the film which includes an alarm clock ringing, marimba, electric bass and woodwind playing in major seconds. This eclectic mix of styles would undoubtedly have an influence on future composers as Tim Eldred writes; 'the moment Miyagawa's Yamato Theme hit the stores as a 45-rpm single, the fans swarmed in to scoop it up. This led to the strange dichotomy of the music outperforming the show it had come from' (Eldred, 2013) suggesting that future composers would undoubtedly have been influenced by such an anime's popularity.



Fig. 4.3 – A still image from the 1974 opening titles to *Space Battleship Yamato*

Space Battleship Yamato was a defining point for anime; particularly for its story and music. *Yamato* had shown that there was indeed a market for deeper and darker stories and that the type of music used in such a story would be lapped up by fans of the anime – particularly by teenagers and young adults. These fans would not necessarily be consumers of the jazz and classical idioms that the soundtrack draws from, but rather the sound of the anime itself; something that would clearly be seen in anime and eventually Japanese

¹¹⁹ More formally, *Piano Sonata No. 14 in C# minor "Quasi una fantasia"*

video games from this point. What this gave was freedom to the composer, beyond what would have necessarily been achieved in an anime like *Astro Boy*, which was designed for a younger audience.

During the 1980s, trends found in pop music began to manifest themselves into the music of anime. Traditional songs became unfashionable except in anime designed for younger children. Instead, the adoption of the synthesizer in pop would make its way into the science-fiction adventure themed anime aimed at the teen audience (Patten, 2004). This would not be limited to Japan however; as the pop music of America¹²⁰ began to extend its global reach, it would only be natural that films of both the US and Japan would reflect this. Anime titles such as *California Crisis* (dir. Mizuho Nishikubo, 1986), *Ninja Senshi Tobikage* (dir. Masami Annō, 1986) and *Project A-ko* (dir. Katsuhiko Nishijama, 1986) are all examples of anime that made heavy use of synthesisers in their soundtracks. Where soundtracks did not include synthesisers, an eclectic stylistic mix would often be heard. The anime television movie *Dracula: Sovereign of the Damned* (dir. Minoru Okazaki, 1980) – based upon the Marvel Comics' *Tomb of Dracula* title was one such as example. The music was by the composer Seiji Yokoyama – a graduate of Kunitachi College of Music – known for his symphonic sound. The film's soundtrack was composed with a number of different styles that interwove with one another. It begins in a pastiche of the Baroque period with a sound reminiscent of a composer such as Bach due to its heavy use of fugal textures and timbres such as pipe organ and strings that are typically associated with that period. Later however, it passes through more of a Romantic sound giving suggestions of a composer such as Liszt through its chromaticism, an increase in timbral forces and dynamic contrast, before adding in elements more associated with jazz for the film's climactic battle scene.¹²¹ Similarly, the series *Lupin III* (dir. Yuzo Aoki, 1984) also avoided the use of synthesisers in its score. Instead, Aoki – the series' director – made the decision to employ one of Japan's most famous modern jazz composers – Yuji Ono – who wrote both songs and the incidental scoring and worked closely with the production crew to create music for many individual episodes. This stylistic rejection of the timbral choices other animes were employing was possibly due to the nature of the plot and its protagonist; after all, a gentleman thief is assumed to be sophisticated with the allure of the high-profile items he attempts to steal offering a seductive appeal. This is arguably something that jazz has represented on screen since film noir in the 1940s and 50s and perhaps also by the likes of Henry Mancini's score for *The Pink Panther* (dir. Edwards, 1963) film series.

Within his second epoch of anime milestones, Tsugata also lists *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (dir. Hayao Miyazaki, 1984) – a picture of the film's promotional poster is shown in Fig. 4.4. Dated ten years after *Space Battleship Yamato*, it tells the story of Nausicaä – the young princess of the Valley of the Wind. Set in a future post-apocalyptic world, Nausicaä becomes part of a struggle with the kingdom of Tolmekia as it

¹²⁰ That said, the pop music of America, particularly with the incorporation of the synth, originates from Germany (i.e., Kraftwerk) and the UK (Gary Numan, Human League, Depeche Mode amongst others; see also the Second British Invasion of US). There are also various strands in EDM from Europe to the US (Italo-disco, Chicago House etcetera).

¹²¹ Like with Miyagawa's *Space Battleship Yamato*'s soundtrack, the music for *Dracula: Sovereign of the Damned* was arranged into a thirteen-movement symphony performed by the Transylvania Baroque Ensemble.

attempts to use an ancient weapon to destroy a jungle of mutant giant insects. The film is a precursor to the films of the production company “Studio Ghibli” which Miyazaki would go onto create after *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*’s success. Its musical score was composed by Joe Hisaishi – the first Miyazaki film that he wrote the music for.¹²² Hisaishi would go on to score a further ten Studio Ghibli films and lead him to compose the soundtrack to the Studio Ghibli-inspired JRPG *Ni no Kuni: Wrath of the White Witch* and its sequel *Ni no Kuni II: Revenant Kingdom* as discussed in Chapter Three.

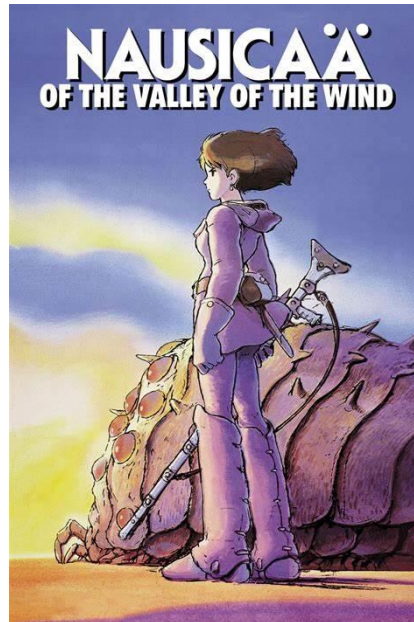


Fig. 4.4 – A promotional poster for *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*

For *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* Hisaishi sought to bring together the traditional orchestral film score with his skills as an electronic-music experimenter in order ‘to give the film a distinctive, otherworldly feel that was half-rhythmic and half-familiar composition – primitive music from 1,000 years in the future’ (Le Blanc & Odell, 2015). Alexandra Roedder writes that the film score shows ‘a style of musical placement using frequent awkward starts and stops and a lack of audiovisual synchronization consistent with the pre-composed music of TV anime’ (Roedder, 2013, p. 18). She continues by explaining that this is a feature of many of Hisaishi’s earlier scores and those of his contemporaries of the time. By doing so, this asynchronous approach to *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* creates ‘long, unbroken melodies’ (ibid, p. iii) that create an overall emotional feel rather a direct representation of the scene at any given moment; a link perhaps to Wagnerian theory of the musical stage with the expression of feeling being an aesthetic goal (Lippman, 1958, p. 210). Take for example, the opening eight bars to the film’s main theme - “The Days Long Gone” as shown in Fig. 4.5 ([audio track 4.01](#)):

¹²² Jonathan Broxton suggests that this director-composer partnership would become world-renowned in a manner similar to that of Steven Spielberg and John Williams in the USA (Broxton, 2013).



Fig. 4.5 – Transcription of “The Days Long Gone” from *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* by Joe Hisaishi

This last sentence requires further explanation for these melodies would come to be another dichotomy between CRPGs of the West and Japan. As will continued to be argued throughout this chapter, anime’s impact upon the JRPG musical score is readily apparent and this use of melody – when incorporated with the choices of style and timbre – provides a degree of contrast between CRPGs of Japan and the West. The emotional impact of melodies has been studied for some time (Schellenberg, Krysciak & Campbell 2000, Wermke & Mende 2011, Beveridge & Knox 2018) with results finding that compared to other musical elements such as harmony, melodies will have a greater emotional impression upon the listener; particularly through pitch and to a lesser degree rhythm. This use of melody is explored further in Chapter Six which discusses the prevalence of JRPG cues as pieces within video game music concerts. Whilst Roedder arguably states this method of compositional design as a negative, it is an important Japanese tradition that would go on to feed into Japanese videogame music design. This then gives a diametrically opposite accompanying style to the point-to-point synchronicity found in Hollywood films and while there are numerous disadvantages, this approach does give several benefits including:

- Character motifs could be created that can be played in their entirety or at least for longer, giving more of an emotional connection to them (which is again a connection to Wagerian theory)
- Combat and exploratory themes are more memorable for they are not adherent to specific actions on screen.

Two other additional anime from the 1980s merit mention due to their cultural impact or longevity. These are the film *Akira* (dir. Ôtomo, 1988) and the series *Dragon Ball* (dir. Okazaki/Nishio, 1986 - 89). *Akira* is set in a dystopian year 2019, centred around the city of Neo Tokyo. Its story is centred around two principal characters; Shōtarō Kaneda – the leader of a local biker gang – and his childhood friend Tetsuo Shima. Tetsuo acquires tremendous telekinetic powers after a motorbike accident which eventually threatens Neo Tokyo itself. *Akira* is widely regarded as a hugely influential anime film – particularly in the realm of animation and its impact not just upon the anime industry in Japan but also upon Western audiences (Brenner, 2007, p. 282). Its setting inspired many anime cyberpunk works including *Ghost in the Shell* (dir. Oshii, 1995), *Battle Angel Alita* (dir. Fukutomi, 1993) and *Cowboy Bebop* (dir. Watanabe, 1998). Outside of Japan, *Akira* has been referenced as influences in films such as *The Matrix* (dir. Wachowski Brothers, 1999), *Kill Bill* (dir. Tarantino,

2003) and *Inception* (dir. Nolan, 2010). It also ‘set the scene for *Pokémon*, *Naruto* and [the *Dragon Ball* sequel series] *Dragonball Z* to become cultural phenomenon’ (Usher, 2016). Much was made of the film’s plot, some commentators suggesting that it was confusing or pseudo-philosophical in its ending, but there is no doubt to its impact upon American art-house viewers and how it left audiences wanting more (Napier, 2000, p. 5). The film’s music was created by Tsutomu Ōhashi under his pseudonym Shoji Yamashiro. The soundtrack is an eclectic mix of styles, featuring synths, ethnic percussion, gamelan, organ, choir and electric guitar of which Clements and McCartney write as being a ‘thumping, south-Asian influenced score’ (Clements & McCartney, 2015, p. 2090). Whilst not particularly thematic at any point, its stark differences in both timbre and style from one cue to another are important in creating a distinctly non-homogenous sound; a clear similarity to the wealth of styles within the different cues of the various JRPGs discussed in Chapters Two and Three and something that would be seen from this point on in Japanese animation.

Meanwhile, the anime series *Dragon Ball* is an adaptation of the manga series by the same name created by Akira Toriyama with a still image of the series opening titles shown in Fig. 4.6. The *Dragon Ball* anime series consists of 153 episodes and has since spawned multiple spin-off films and sequel series including (to date): *Dragon Ball*, *Dragon Ball Z*, *Dragon Ball GT*, *Dragon Ball Z Kai*, *Dragon Ball Super* and *Dragon Ball Heroes* – all of which (with the exception of a few episodes from *Dragon Ball Z Kai*) have been dubbed into English and released to western audiences. The initial series of *Dragon Ball* (sometimes styled as *Dragonball*) follows the protagonist Goku from childhood to adulthood as he trains in the martial arts. The title of the series comes from Goku’s quest - along with a number of companions – in finding the seven dragon balls which when brought together summon a dragon who can grant any wish. By the end of the original series, Goku has become one of the world’s greatest fighters.



Fig. 4.6 – Still image taken from the opening titles to *Dragon Ball*

The genre of fiction that this anime falls under is almost impossible to describe; part fantasy, part sci-fi with elements of comedy (most noticeably slapstick), pseudo-philosophy in addition to a lot of martial arts, all-

whilst being aimed at a younger demographic. Tonally, the anime could be described to Western audiences not familiar with anime as completely disorderly, yet the success of *Dragon Ball* – both natively and internationally – cannot be overstated. Schules, Peterson and Picard make special mention of *Dragonball* in the development of CRPGs in Japan writing that the manga’s publisher *Shonen Jump* helped in cross-promotion between manga and video games and ‘facilitated the popularity of the CRPGs in Japan’ (2018, p. 117). The composer for both the *Dragon Ball* and *Dragon Ball Z* anime series was Shunsuke Kikuchi – a composer who has worked on both television and film of all genres. His compositional style for *Dragon Ball* has been described as imitating the 1960/70s kung-fu films from Hong Kong and Wild-Western films of the 1960s yet, for other works; he has drawn on Latin and Jazz as well as new wave synth.

Take for example the anime’s main theme titled ‘Makafushigi Adventure’, shown below as a lead-sheet in Fig. 4.7 and heard in [audio track 4.03](#). With the exception of the two instances of a G towards the end of the melody, the main theme is almost entirely in F-pentatonic minor; a homage perhaps to its Eastern roots. Within its orchestration, we have synthesisers, a driving rock drum beat with a funk bass line accompanied by synth-brass hits as would be heard in jazz. With accompanying animation of the protagonist engaging in martial-arts, this main theme is almost anthemic in nature and arguably connects it to the “General’s Ode” – ‘a theme song for a nineteenth/twentieth-century southern Chinese martial arts folk hero named Wong Fei-hung’ (McGuire, 2018, p. 49) whose piece has been accompanying ‘over 100 productions since the 1950s’ (ibid).

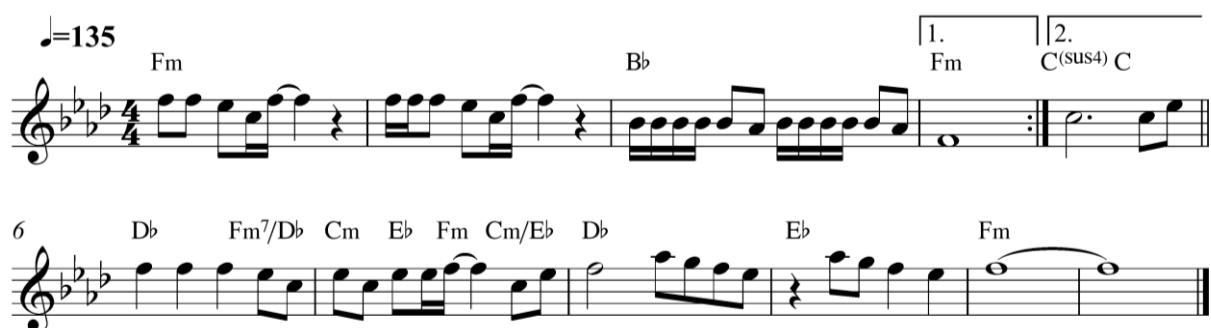


Fig. 4.7 – Transcription of the main theme to *Dragon Ball* by Shunsuke Kikuchi.

3. Neon Genesis Evangelion and Princess Mononoke and their influences, 1995 – and 1997 –

The final epoch that Nobuyuki Tsugata states begins with the anime series *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (dir. Hideaki Anno, 1995 - 96). The anime is a sci-fi series set fifteen years after a worldwide cataclysmic event, focusing in particular on the fortified city of Tokyo-3. The protagonist Shinji Ikari is recruited by his estranged father into a secret organisation named “Nerv” to pilot a giant bio-mechanical machine called an “Evangelion”. His objective is to fight any and all of an alien race called “Angels” before they can cause another cataclysm. As the series progresses, the Shinji and the crew of the Evangelion begin to uncover the truth behind the events and the true motives of the Nerv organisation.

The music for the both the series, its two film sequels and the later sequel series¹²³ was written by Shirō Sagisu. Sagisu’s career in music began in the late 1970s and he is now both a composer and music producer. To date, *Neon Genesis Evangelion* remains his best-known work. Within Sagisu’s soundtrack, multiple musical genres are represented, including a pastiche of neo-Romantic orchestral cues, jazz and American country and western. Just as with the Hisaishi’s cues for *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, much of the material is highly thematic and makes use of character themes – something that was able to be explored over the series’ duration. What is of note however, is the lack of a homogenous sound – characters are represented by an entire plethora of music which arguably gives *Neon Genesis Evangelion* its unique and memorable audio.¹²⁴ Take for example the cue “I, Shinji”: it is scored for full orchestra in a moderately slow simple-triple time metre with a prominent crotchet, triplet quaver, crotchet ostinato prevalent throughout. Clearly based around F minor, the piece is stylistically similar to arguably that of a sarabande or perhaps a bolero and is built around an eight-bar melody that is then repeated multiple times throughout the cue with variations to the orchestrations each time it is repeated. A transcription is shown below in Fig. 4.8 ([audio track 4.02](#)):

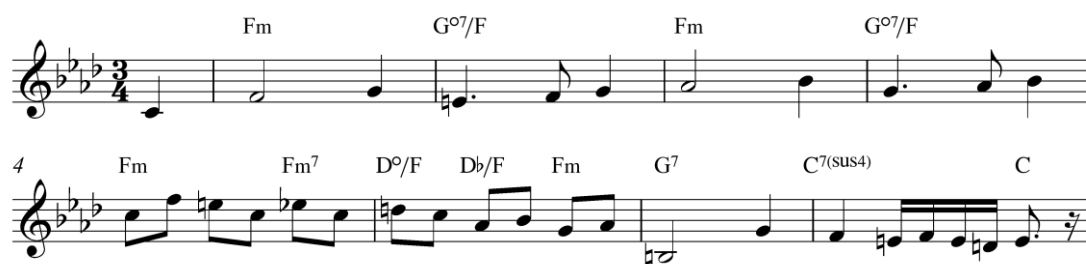


Fig. 4.8 – Transcription of “I, Shinji” from *Neon Genesis Evangelion* by Shiro Sagisu

“Rei” – the theme for the character of the same name, features a piano for almost the entire cue, with added-note chords in an A minor tonality providing a haunting dissonance completely different from Shinji. The cue “Asuka Strikes!” features a country or bluegrass style similar to “Ring of Fire” by June Carter Cash and Merle Kilgore. The theme for Misato, features a whimsical orchestral piece with added popular elements such as a bass guitar and drum kit reminiscent of American light music of the 1940, 50s and 60s of composers such as Leroy Anderson. In all of these examples, the emotional aspect of these character themes would be similar to leitmotifs found in western classical music and film music where there was a need to allow the audience to emotionally bond with a character through the music, to recognise when they were being referenced or when they were central to the plot. In turn, this relates to the use of melody (as described above) which was something seen since at least Hisaishi’s score for *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* and is perhaps central to the idea of a character theme. The clearly disparate styles that Sagisu uses throughout complements this

¹²³ *Rebuild of Evangelion* (dir. Hideaki Anno et. al, 2007 – present).

¹²⁴ The soundtrack also contains a number of pieces of western classical music; amongst them, pieces by Beethoven, Bach, Verdi and Handel are included. Additionally, an arrangement of the Bart Howard jazz standard “Fly Me to the Moon” is also included and – as is typical of many anime series – a J-Pop theme song was written titled “A Cruel Angel’s Thesis” performed by Yoko Takahashi.

idea; this eclectic mixture was not only accepted, but used in the musical scores for many other animes moving forwards – perhaps because these stylistic differences enable composers to focus on the core-personality traits of characters and build upon them, rather than being restricted by a musical style that matches the setting or is constant through the series. This of course was already being seen across JRPG score design – as seen in titles such as *Final Fantasy V* and thus clearly shows that the early-to-mid 90s was a major directional shift for the music of Japanese multi-media. Ultimately, there can be no doubt of the impact that *Neon Genesis Evangelion* has had upon Japanese popular culture (Fujitani, 2001, p. 147) and it is credited with being the start of a new wave of anime serials. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it ‘is still considered by many fans as the “definitive anime”’ (Napier, 2008, p. 184).

Princess Mononoke (dir. Miyazaki, 1997) – or *Mononokehime* in Japan – is narratively and tonally the complete opposite to *Neo Genesis Evangelion* and the promotional poster for the Japanese release is shown in Fig. 2.6. Rather than a sci-fi film, it is best described as a historical fantasy war film created and produced by Studio Ghibli. Its plot is complicated, featuring a number of important characters both human and spirit-animal alike. Set in rural Japan, it focuses on a struggle between the spirits or gods of the forest and the various human villages and tribes that have settled around it who are consuming its resources. Its central theme is that of the environment and that of humanity’s relationship with nature. Miyazaki also cites themes of sexuality and disability that appear in the film (Kitano, 2019) whilst the American scholar John Tucker adds ‘geography, art, architecture, religion, philosophy, society, politics and the martial arts’ (Tucker, 2003, p. 75).



Fig. 4.9 – Promotional Poster for *Mononokehime*

The soundtrack reunited Miyazaki with Joe Hisaishi and was performed by the Tokyo City Philharmonic Orchestra. As with his score for *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, his music here is strongly thematic with motifs for specific characters reoccurring in the film as is needed. The soundscape is broadly one of a contrast

between sorrow and hope and according to Tian Zhang, has a ‘strong sense of the Japanese national flavour’ (Zhang, 2016, p. 368). Take for example the opening five bars to the main melody used across the film – labelled on the OST as “The Legend of Ashitaka”, a transcription is shown below in Fig. 4.10 ([audio track 4.04](#)):



Fig. 4.10 – Transcription of the opening five bars of the melody to “The Legend of Ashitaka” from *Princess Mononoke* composed by Joe Hisaishi

The lack of the D^b in the melody combined with the minimal use of a G, gives the melody the distinct impression of being in the F pentatonic minor scale which arguably creates the ‘Japanese national flavour’ of which Zhang speaks. The blogger Jason Morehead meanwhile – known for the music, movie and pop culture blog *Opus*, writes ‘throughout many of the songs, Hisaishi uses the same vaguely Oriental [sic] flute melody; it can be either achingly melancholy or grandiose and sweeping, depending upon the other elements he weaves in’ (Morehead, 2000). For a detailed analysis of *Princess Mononoke*’s soundtrack, Rayna Denison’s article on Princess Mononoke makes revealing observations. Nevertheless, a couple of points from her article deserve mention here for their links to this chapter. Firstly, her reference to the scholar Jeff Smith and his work on the pop soundtrack where she writes;

Smith notes four kinds of soundtrack ranging from the orchestral to those composed entirely of pop songs. Mononokehime’s original soundtrack contained a theme song sung in a classical style by counter-tenor Yoshikazu Mera. Thus *Mononokehime*’s classical score should technically fit with Smith’s first category, namely “leitmotiv-laden orchestral scores composed within neo-romantic or modernist styles.” However, due to the theme song’s popularity (it was released as a single in Japan), Mononokehime’s original soundtrack fits more comfortably with what Smith labels “orchestral scores that feature one or two popular songs” in his second category (Denison, 2005, p. 4).

As is apparent from the other anime soundtracks featured above, many fit into this second category that Smith describes and Denison’s analogy alludes to. This however, only partly matches anime’s musical score design – namely, as stated, the use of multiple other styles and instrumental timbres. As such, it is possible to draw correlations with many JRPGs that also partly fit into this category whereby they too, often feature a theme song and/or ending song (for example *Eternal Blue*, *The Tales Series*, *Final Fantasy X-2*) with an orchestral score, although they are also heavily populated with various other styles and instrumental timbres. This correlation between anime and JRPG score design suggests that this could be thought of a wider cultural feature when discussing Japanese multimedia which brings together a fusion of styles into one coherent product.

Other anime that Tsugata does not mention but are worthy of inclusion from a musical point of view here are as follows:

- *Cowboy Bebop* (dir. Watanabe, 1998)

Cowboy Bebop is a 26-episode anime series based on the manga by the same name written by Cain Kuga. It is set in the year 2071 and tells the story of a crew of bounty hunters that travel through space in their ship called “Bebop”. Narratively, it covers several genres but the most notable ones are science-fiction and western influences with arguably elements of film noir. Themes include existentialism, loneliness and the attempt of trying to escape the past.

The show’s name is homage to the music to which it is based around. Rather than the arguably expected use of synthesised score, composer Yoko Kanno’s score is written in a bebop style with elements of western, opera and other forms of jazz also used as inspiration (Tei & Ortiz, 2003). Highly thematic and memorable, the score has made its way out of just accompaniment for the series and into the concert hall, with the main theme - “Tank!” – being often found in sets of jazz bands.

- *One Piece* (dir. Kōnosuke Uda et. al, 1999 – present)

One Piece is a multi-media series beginning originally with the manga created by Eiichiro Oda before becoming an anime film and series and now encompassing, OVAs, video games and more. It tells the story of the pirate “Monkey D. Luffy” and his adventures to discover the elusive treasure “One Piece” and in turn become king of the pirates. Along the way, he puts together a crew for his ship including a swordsman, a chef, a skeletal musician, a thief-turned navigator, an archaeologist, a cyborg mechanic, a sharp shooter, a fish-man helmsman and a reindeer doctor. Through its description of characters, it is easy to see that *One Piece* inhabits a large number of narrative themes, including fantasy, sci-fi, comedy and elements of horror. As the best-selling manga series in history (Loo, 2018) and one of the longest running anime-series (at the time of writing it has ~950 episodes), it is not difficult to see that the music of the series has to also inhabit a variety of musical styles to reflect this which include orchestral, jazz, a pastiche on traditional Mexican, funk, soul, western sea-shanties, influences of traditional Eastern music. Composed by Kohei Tanaka and Shirō Hamaguchi, the music for the series has been released as singles, soundtrack CDs and compilation albums and in addition to the expected timbres in the above styles, there are also multiple instances of electric guitars, synthesisers, a variety of world-percussion. Hamaguchi is particularly notable for this thesis as he is also an arranger/orchestrator for the *Final Fantasy* series of JRPGs. Just as in *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, there is a distinct emphasis on character themes – particularly concerning Luffy’s crewmates. Long melodies – rather than specially synchronised scoring – is the chosen employment of cues within the score – no doubt due to the weekly release schedule of such a long series. Once

again, this series also makes use of J-Pop songs in the opening to each story arc.

- *Naruto/Naruto Shippuden* (dir. Hayato Date et. al, 2002 – 2017)

Naruto and its sequel series *Naruto Shippuden* are a combined 720-episode anime based on the manga by the same name, written by Masashi Kishimoto. Following the story of the ninja Naruto Uzamaki, it follows his story from childhood, to becoming the saviour of the shinobi world. Like with *One Piece*, the world of *Naruto* is a fantastical one, in which elements of fantasy, science-fiction and horror are mixed all while drawing on the Japanese historical traditions of the samurai and ninja. The music for the series is composed by Toshio Masuda and the prolific anime and video game composer Yasuharu Takanashi. The score for *Naruto* is notable for using traditional Japanese instruments such as the shamisen and shakuhachi – arguably a reference to the style of the early films that the benshi would narrate. These would be combined together with more western instruments such as guitar, drums, bass and piano as well as synthesiser and vocal chanting.

- *Fairy Tail* (dir. Ishihara, 2009 – 2019)

Yasuharu Takanashi is also notable for scoring multiple other anime series, including the long-running series *Fairy Tail*. This anime series - based on the manga by Hiro Mashima – is arguably more consistent in its narrative tone than *One Piece* and *Naruto* with its focus being on fantasy and action. It focuses on the characters Natsu Dragneel and Lucy Heartfilia – wizards from the guild “Fairy Tail” and their adventures in taking on mercenary jobs as well as aiming to combat the variety of enemies that Fairy Tail encounters. To give a more unique voice to the music of the anime, Takanashi employs a Celtic-Rock feel to many of the tracks – particularly the ones that feature as leitmotifs for the principal characters and the guild itself.

- *Sword Art Online* (dir. Itō, 2012 - present)

Sword Art Online began life as a light novel series by series creator Reki Kawahara before becoming a manga series, an anime series and a series of video games all under the same name. The series as a whole is of particular interest in the links between anime and JRPGs. The original plot of the light novel and anime follows the main protagonists Kazuto “Kirito” Kirigaya and Asuna Yuuki as they become players trapped in a virtual reality MMORPG world. In order to free themselves from this virtual world, the game’s creator states that they must clear all of the 100 floors of the steel castle that they now reside in. Because each floor is a self-contained ‘world’, the fictional genres that the series can inhabit ranges from fantasy, to supernatural horror, mystery, a love story and more. Yuki Kajiura composed the music for the anime series and its three sequel series, playing off the narrative themes previously discussed. Musically, the soundtrack relies on JRPG staples; battle tracks, thematic

environmental tracks, solo piano pieces interspersed with pieces that exist more as soundscapes to flesh out the material.

There are of course, hundreds of relevant anime series not mentioned here, each with their own soundtracks; some originating from manga and some original stories. Tsugata lists three culturally important epochs of anime which have been discussed with an emphasis on their music from the early days of *Astro Boy*, to hugely popular serials such as *One Piece* and *Naruto*. These examples are either notable due to their respective series popularity both domestically and internationally, or their cultural impact and pushing a sense of Japanese soft-power through this medium of entertainment.

Stories are important in Japanese anime – these series with many hundreds of episodes would not be successful otherwise. Yet, these stories and their respective narratives are undoubtedly different to the ones found in western animation. Genres are mixed and spliced together creating a distinctly atypical style that is unafraid to inhabit these spaces of fiction that western stories often are. In turn, the music that accompanies these anime films and series has to reflect this. It is often the case that multiple genres of music are used in an anime's score – particularly with what many in the west would deem inconsistent narratives. From the use of traditional Japanese instruments in *Naruto*, to the orchestral/synthesised fusion of *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* or the Celtic inspired themes of *Fairy Tail*, the fantasy anime rarely has a homogenous sound that indicates to listeners unfamiliar with the anime as to what type of fiction it is. This therefore directly links to the earlier discussion on JRPGs also having a non-homogenous sound for as has also been highlighted several times during this section, many of these composers also create music for video games. As such, with anime being such a cultural force in Japanese society and its impact upon Western culture, it is impossible to discuss the music of fantasy videogames - and in particular those of the JRPG – without doing so. Clements and McCarthy summarise the importance of music and anime well:

Anime is supported by a phalanx of talented composers, many of whom also work on live-action or game soundtracks and a few with distinguished careers outside the motion picture industry in classical, jazz, or other musical forms. The leader of the pack is Yoko Kanno, whose scores cover every musical angle from the jazz of Cowboy Bebop to the church-influenced chorals of Escaflowne. Joe Hisaishi, who has been Studio Ghibli's house composer since he scored 1984's *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind*, started out as a minimalist [with pieces such as "Vertical Lateral Thinking"]... Kohei Tanaka excels at martial themes and variations on Mozart, most notably in his score to *Gunbuster*. Kenji Kawai's pulsing compositions have added extra menace to the scores of *Ghost in the Shell* and *Patlabor*; and Shiro Sagisu's multiple variations on both Beethoven and Burt Bacharach adds a distinctive tone to *Evangelion* (Clements & McCarthy, 2015).

JRPGs in particular offer a unique relationship with manga and anime. Their stories are longer than in other games – and particularly with the advent of games like *Final Fantasy VII* – which brought about FMV cutscenes

and 3D graphics, leaving the boundaries between anime and videogame blurred indeed. Notice how Gibbons again refers to cartoons when describing JRPGs:

Western RPGs tend to favour individualized character creation, free exploration, and the creation of dark, 'realistic' fantasy worlds; JRPGs, on the other hand, typically privilege colourful, often cartoonish environments and situations, and a linear narrative with pre-established characters (Gibbons, 2017, p. 413).

Aoyama/Izushi offer another example: 'the most well-known example of the three media's integration [video games, manga and anime] is the success of *Pokémon*... Shortly after its debut in 1996, the character began appearing in monthly manga magazines for children. This ignited its popularity resulting in a TV animation program series in 1997, followed by a couple of blockbuster films. The appearance of Pokémon in a variety of media reinforced one another, facilitating the growth of the market for video games' (Aoyama & Izushi, 2002). In fact, since their article's publication, the Pokémon brand has grown to arguably one of the most dominant cultural entities in the world, with (as of March 2017) over 300 million units sold within video games, over 1,000 episodes of anime released in 98 countries, 19 feature length films released and a combined market size of over ¥6.0 trillion which equates to ~\$54.8 billion/£39.3 billion (Pokémon Company, 2017). Matthew Kizer adds that *Pokémon* not only revitalized the anime industry and its acceptability in the US, 'it also brought the Japanese video game industry back to the forefront in American households' (Kizer, 2012) with children buying Nintendo's *Game Boy* just to play *Pokémon* where they would not only see the distinct anime-style graphics, but also hear the memorable melodies.

JRPGs and anime have had substantial success on a global scale and as has been shown, they have clearly influenced one another since the 1990s all while drawing in fans of the genres in western countries. Henry Jenkins (2004) suggests that 'western youth is asserting its identity through its consumption of Japanese anime and manga... A new pop cosmopolitanism is being promoted by corporate interests both in Asia and in the West.' Mia Consalvo adds that anime, manga and video games appear to be regarded as 'Japanese cultural cool' (Consalvo, 2009, p. 95).

Interestingly however, this cross-pollination of ideas absorbed from multiple other cultures has led to a dilution of what is natively Japanese as Douglas McGray writes:

Many [people in Japan] seem surprised at the idea of Japanese cultural might abroad. They tended to think very little about foreign audiences. What they talked about instead was foreign inspiration. At times, it seems almost a strange point of pride, a kind of one-downmanship, to argue just how little Japan there is in modern Japan. Ironically, that may be a key to the spread of Japanese cool. [One interviewee said] "I can't always distinguish elements of traditional Japanese culture from Japanese culture invented for tourists (McGray, 2002, p. 47).

What we are left with is a melting point of cultures permeating both Japanese video games as well as Japanese anime. As suggested throughout this thesis, Japanese culture has made an impression of Western culture and vice versa, creating a unique fusion that is still Japanese. JRPGs and – by their nature – their soundtracks, are just another product of this.

4.5 Japanese Fantasy: A Myriad of Possibilities

Susan Napier – in her book “The Fantastic in Modern Japanese Literature” – writes that there is ‘an immense and fascinating variety to the modern Japanese fantastic. In its strategies, its techniques, and finally in its messages the fantastic is multivalent’ (Napier, 2005, p. 4). As has been shown in the above section of this chapter, Japanese fantasy in manga and anime is shown in a myriad of styles. From the epic ninjas of *Naruto* with their chakra forms of magic, to the devil-fruits of *One Piece*, the magical beings of *Fairy Tail*, to the gods of *Princess Mononoke*, ‘Japanese fantasy does not only look back to indigenous myth, it also creates its own worlds, worlds which are totally “modern” at the same time as they are “Japanese” (ibid, pp. 11 – 12). This is reflected in the stories of JRPGs; from the genre defining early games of *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy*, to the time travelling of *Chrono Trigger*, the dimension hopping of *Chrono Cross*, to the post-apocalyptic world of *NieR* and the symbiosis of people and Pokémon in the *Pokémon* games. However, if we understand from the definitions laid out in Chapter One as to what fantasy is, why are JRPGs so different from their WRPG counterparts – and in turn why is the music so different?

Another hypothesis could be made that fantastical worlds in Japan are not necessarily the “medieval” worlds found in Western fantasy. The fantastical epics and fairy-tales predominantly showcased in Western fantasy are not nearly as homogenous in Japanese narratives – both in manga/anime/video games and more generally – and I argue that this is predominantly due to the elements of science-fiction found within them. Whilst it is generally assumed that fantasy will be a balance of nature and magic, Japanese fantasies allow for futuristic technology to be used within them as long as it does not upset the balance of the world. Below in table 4.2 are examples of fantasy worlds with science-fiction elements listed from Chapter Two:

Name	Year	Sci-Fi Trope
<i>Secret of Mana</i>	1993	Flying fortress
<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	1994	Mechanised Suits
<i>Chrono Trigger</i>	1995	Time-travel
<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	1997	Airships
<i>Grandia</i>	1997	Developing technologically advanced civilizations
<i>Final Fantasy VIII/Phantasy Star</i>	1999	Space travel
<i>NieR</i>	2010	Androids
<i>Xenoblade Chronicles</i>	2010	Mechanically/robotically enhanced enemies
<i>Final Fantasy XIII-2</i>	2011	Rogue A.I.

Table 4.2 – Examples of Sci-Fi Tropes Found in Fantasy JRPGs

Where technology and nature (often magic) are allowed to grow in harmony, these worlds are often seen as a utopia. Where technology develops in a way which damages or destroys the old-world; this is where conflict arises or a story starts. As such, it is proposed that a fantasy in Japan allows for science-fiction elements as long as these do not overpower the fantasy elements otherwise, the story is a science-fiction one with supernatural elements for example *Akira*. Therefore, a clear opportunity arises; if the story itself can incorporate elements of a whole host of different genre fiction elements – not least science-fiction – as long as it does not over-power the fantastical elements, then the story’s soundtrack can incorporate these within its score as well. This provides composers of JRPGs an exceedingly large amount of freedom when it comes to the stylistic qualities of each and every one of the tracks within the score. No longer is a homogenous sound required if the narrative fantasy of the story is not homogenous. As noted in Chapter Two, Nobuo Uematsu once stated between his scores for *Final Fantasy IV* and *V* – that moving forwards, his music for JRPGs ‘could be any kind of music’. This is apparent across the JRPG sub-genre from the mid-1990s onwards. To support this, consider Table 4.3, which details 22 different styles of music and an example of a cue from a JRPG that matches this particular genre. It should be noted that there are difficulties in assigning certain tracks to a single genre due to many pieces of music crossing between categories. Nevertheless, the objective of Table 4.3 is not complete accuracy or authority when it comes to categorising JRPG cues, but more to provide an overview of the eclectic nature of the JRPG musical score in support of my proposed ‘non-homogenous sound’. Additionally, these pieces are often pastiches – approximations of a certain style rather than obeying absolutely every facet of a particular genre and finally, an effort was made to span a sizeable amount of history. In the below table, *Final Fantasy IV* is the earliest – released in 1991 – with *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* being released in 2020; a time span of 29 years of JRPG history:

Musical Style	Game	Year	Cue title¹²⁵
Blues	<i>Final Fantasy XIII</i>	2009	"Daddy's Got the Blues"
Celtic	<i>Suikoden</i>	1995	"An Old Irish Song"
Country	<i>Final Fantasy XV</i>	2016	"A Quick Pit Stop"
Electronic	<i>Xenosaga Episode II: Jenseits Von Gut Und Böse</i>	2005	"Strain – Jin"
Flamenco	<i>Final Fantasy IX</i>	2000	"Vamo' Alla Flamenco"
Funk	<i>Earthbound (Mother 2)</i>	1994	"Runaway Five Left the Building"
Italian Folk	<i>Final Fantasy XV</i>	2016	"Altissia"
Jazz	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	2001	"Brass de Chocobo"
J-Pop	<i>Persona 2: Innocent Sin</i>	1999	"Next to You" (Kimi no Tonari)
Latin	<i>Chrono Cross</i>	1995	"Fields of Time – Home"
Metal	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	2001	"Otherworld"
Operatic Aria	<i>Eternal Sonata</i>	2007	"Heaven's Mirror"
Plainchant	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	2001	"Song of Prayer – Valefor"
Rap	<i>Persona 3</i>	2006	"Mass Destruction"
Rock/Prog Rock	<i>Baten Kaitos</i>	2003	"Violent Storm"
Samba	<i>Final Fantasy IV</i>	1991	"Samba De Chocobo"
Tango	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	1997	"Tango of Tears"
Techno	<i>Final Fantasy VII: Remake</i>	2020	"Due Recompence"
Western Renaissance	<i>Final Fantasy IX</i>	2000	"The Place I'll Return to Someday"
Western Baroque	<i>Golden Sun</i>	2001	"McCoy's Palace"
Western Classical	<i>Final Fantasy V</i>	1992	"Waltz Clavier"
Western Romantic	<i>Ni no Kuni II: Revenant Kingdom</i>	2018	"The Boundless Skies"

Table 4.3 – Examples of cues found in JRPGs that match various international styles of music

As is shown, just as there are a wide array of science-fiction genres found in the narratives of fantasy JRPGs, so too are there a wide array of international musical styles that exist within this ludic sub-genre. Linking back to the framing of this study, the above table clearly offers evidence of the amalgamation of international cultural influences upon the JRPG score, likely brought over by America and found initially in anime before moving across to video games and then JRPGs. That said, if musical styles are so interchangeable, how therefore, do JRPGs create a coherent score? This must be one that players of a JRPG have accepted and the development team have implemented into their design and as such, this next section will propose a new model that can help answer this question.

4.6 Thematic Templates in JRPGs

As described throughout both Chapters Two and Three, from the inception of games such as *Ultima III: Exodus* and *Dragon Quest*, single player fantasy CRPGs in general have had a certain number of common pieces of music within their score. I refer to these as thematic 'templates'; certain pieces of music used to

¹²⁵ As before, the titles of the cues are taken from the game's respective OST.

represent a location, a character, an object or an idea in the vast majority of CRPGs. The eight themes Koichi Sugiyama composed for *Dragon Quest* however – which as suggested at the end of Chapter Three – no longer adequately support the vast array of cues found in contemporary JRPGs. To expand upon table 3.2, it is now possible – knowing the history and having the supporting evidence of the cultural influences upon the JRPG – to propose a new model. This is shown below in table 4.4:

Cue Archetype	Template	Explanation <i>Musical Description</i>
Special	Prologue/Opening	Narratively driven. Sets scene at beginning of game and likely to accompany opening cutscene. <i>Can be in any style.</i>
	Main Theme/Overture	Triumphant. Heard in various iterations across game. <i>The main form will be orchestral usually with rock elements. Strongly thematic.</i>
	Sentimental/ Hopeful	Accompaniment when story needs a positive emotional support. <i>Most often uses piano. Moderate tempo. Strongly thematic.</i>
	Ending	Triumphant or whimsical ending to narrative, usually accompanied with final cutscene or end credits. If for credits, can be a unique piece or more usually a medley of other cues. <i>Usually orchestral – featuring either V – I or the so called ‘Mario Cadence’¹²⁶ ($^bVI - ^bVII - I$) to end.</i>
	Entering Combat Stinger	When separated from “combat – normal” track, deliberately used as an interruption from the background cue with a sense of urgency. <i>Either sound effect or forte dynamic, chromatic, scalar run.</i>
	Victory Stinger	Triumphant music used to signal a successful outcome to the action themes. <i>Fanfare on (synth) brass. Usually orchestral, but can have rock elements.</i>
	Death/Game Over Stinger	Sombre music used to signal a failed outcome to the action themes. <i>Either sound effect, or acoustic instruments, mainly piano, often woodwind/strings. Minor tonality. Slow tempo.</i>
Character	Protagonist – Male	Used to represent the main male character. <i>Any style. Major tonality. Moderately to moderately fast tempo. Mezzo-forte to forte dynamic.</i>
	Protagonist – Female	Used to represent the main female character. <i>Lyrical. Will almost always use piano or harp as chordal instrument with flute or violin as melody instrument. Typically, slightly slower than male protagonist though this depends on the narrative. Fits the traditional Western Hollywood treatment of women through music.¹²⁷</i>
Area	Calm	Accompanying cue to any area of the game that is non-threatening to the player <u>except</u> for “spiritual” locations (shown below). Narratively driven based on Chatman’s “Setting”. <i>Any non-aggressive style, major tonality. Moderate or slow tempo. Mezzo forte dynamic or lower. Thematic.</i>

¹²⁶ See Jason Brame, ‘Examining Non- Linear Forms: Techniques for the Analysis of Scores Found in Video Games’ (Master of Music thesis, Texas Tech University, 2009).

¹²⁷ See Janet K. Halfyard and Victoria Hancock (2014) for a distillation.

	Tense	Accompanying cue to any area of the game that poses a potential threat to the player yet is <u>not</u> an action track. Narratively driven based on Chatman's "Setting". <i>Aggressive or unsettling style, minor tonality often with ambiguous harmonies. Often ambient in nature.</i>
	Spiritual	Accompanying cue for any religious/spiritual area to the game. <i>Choir and/or harp. Minimal percussion though tubular bell sometimes heard. Usually a lot of reverb.</i>
	Ethnically Diverse	Accompanying cue to any area of the game that is significantly narratively different from the main setting. <i>Any culturally identifiable style of music that stands out from the rest of the soundtrack. Often – but not always – will be in a desert region. Usually moderate tempo.</i>
	Stately	Accompanying cue to a noble house, castle, palace, academic institution etcetera. <i>Horns or trumpets take lead with prominent snare. Triadic based melodies.</i>
Action	Combat – Normal	Accompanying cue to a standard battle theme. <i>Energetic, brass, string and percussion heavy with rhythmic ostinati. Forte/fortissimo dynamic, fast tempo. Driving bass line.</i>
	Combat – Boss	Accompanying cue to a boss battle. <i>An increase in musical tension and intensity over combat – normal.</i>
	Combat – Final Boss	Accompanying cue to the final boss of the game. <i>A further increase in musical tension and intensity over combat – boss</i> <i>OR</i> <i>Notably different where tension is reduced creating a contextually 'pure' sound.</i>

Table 4.4 – Proposed list of 'Templates' found in JRPGs and how they fit into the proposed archetypes.

Shading is used purely for visual purposes to differentiate the different cue archetypes.

There is undoubtedly some overlap between Sugiyama's original eight cues and the seventeen proposed sub-categories above. Firstly, Sugiyama's original eight templates do not include stingers which I have placed under the 'special' archetype. As explained in table 3.2, Chatman's "Happenings" described as one of the components of a narrative match with this proposed archetype. For the three stingers listed, these can only be heard when certain game conditions are met: upon entering combat, a successful outcome at combat and a failure at combat respectively. Also included in the special category are two similar sounding cues: "Opening/Prologue" as compared to "Main Theme/Overture". In some games these are disparate tracks, although there are many other occasions where they can be combined into one. When separate, the opening/prologue is the music that usually accompanies the opening expository scene whilst the main theme is usually the cue that underpins all the rest of the narrative's most notable events.

Two ‘character’ themes are proposed: one for the principal male protagonist and one for the principal female protagonist. Whilst notions of gender should be discussed sensitively, it is difficult to argue against the fact that in many JRPGs, there are clear distinctions between the male and female characters within these games and the various musical cues used to accompany them.

Within the ‘area’ cues, are five which cover the vast majority of JRPGs – an increase of just one over the four seen in *Dragon Quest*. Nevertheless, despite the minor increase, the five proposed differ significantly. With the narratives of JRPGs – particularly from the early to mid-90s onwards – being so different to the Western-medieval inspired *Dragon Quest*, it makes sense that terms such as ‘castle’ and ‘town’ are replaced. Instead, we can look to some of the cues found in WRPGs such as *The Elder Scrolls* under Jeremy Soule and categorise them as to “Calm”, “Tense”, “Spiritual”, “Ethnically Diverse” and “Stately”. Granted, “stately” is almost identical to “castle” and “calm/tense” somewhat similar to “town/dungeon” respectively, yet it not only makes sense for these titles to be updated, but to also signify what the cues are used to represent. Take *Final Fantasy X* for example. The game begins following an opening cutscene with a game of futuristic volleyball named blitzball in a stadium surrounded by technologically advanced structures. During the game, the city is attacked by an unidentified force and Tidus – the main character – is forced to battle monsters. As such, it is impossible for the templates established with *Dragon Quest* to match these due to the changes in setting. As is shown in table 4.3, there is a wide and eclectic variety of musical styles used in JRPGs, just as there are a wide variety of locales and narrative plot points and as such, the ‘area’ cues need to represent that. In almost every JRPG, there is a “spiritual” cue of some description – a link back to the point above of technology not overpowering nature.

Finally, for ‘action’ cues, it is now synonymous in many video game genres – not just CRPGs – to differentiate between generic action and bosses/final bosses. As such, three forms of “combat” cues are proposed: normal, boss and final boss. Only the final boss requires any additional clarification. For many CRPGs – and a vast majority of JRPGs – the dramatic tension and intensity within the music is further increased over any other boss theme. Yet there are notable exceptions where the principal protagonist is narratively so alien, so removed from reality or so devoid of emotion that they are almost an empty husk. Where this occurs, the cue used to accompany them significantly changes in comparison to the other action cues and the expected intensity never occurs. This somewhat jarring change of style creates tension in and of itself. Examples include “Gwyn, Lord of Cinder” from *Dark Souls* which features only a piano amidst the bombastic musical score Motoi Sakuraba composed or the cue to the final boss to *Drakengard 3* titled “The Last Song”.

Therefore, to help quantify this newly proposed set of archetypes, we can populate the table with games and examples of cues within their scores that match these. To improve results, two JRPGs have been selected per year from 1997 - 2020. The results are shown below in table 4.5. To help with readability, the cue archetypes have been split so that there are two per page and several headings have been shortened. As before, cue names have been taken from OST track titles and where this is unknown a ✓ or [comment] has been added:

Year	Game	Special							Character	
		Opening/ Prologue	Main Theme	Sentimental/ Hopeful	Ending	Entering Combat	Victory Stinger	Defeat Stinger	Male	Female
1997	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Opening - Bomber Mission	Main Theme of FF7	Launching a Dream into Space	The Planet's Crisis	[Sound Effect]	Victory Fanfare	✓		Aerith's Theme
1997	<i>Grandia</i>	The Edge of the World	Theme of Grandia	Farewell to Sue	Theme of Grandia [Repeated with breaks]	[Sound Effect]	Complete Victory	[Sound Effect]	Justin Hits the Scene	Leen's Love Theme
1998	<i>Jade Cocoon: Story of the Tamamayu</i>	Opening Genesis	Legend of Arcana Main Theme	The Binding Ceremony	Ending Truth of Wisdom	[Sound Effect]	Victory Jingle	[Sound Effect]		
1998	<i>Xenogears</i>	Dark Dawn	Emotions	Gathering Stars in the Night Sky	Small Two Pieces	✓		✓		June Mermaid
1999	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Liberi Fatali		My Mind	Ending Theme	[Sound Effect]	Victory Fanfare	The Loser		Julia
1999	<i>Chrono Cross</i>	Chrono Cross - Scars of Time		Reminiscing - Uneraseable Memory	Life - A Faraway Promise	[Integrated into battle theme]	Victory – A Gift of Spring	A Light for Lost Hopes		
2000	<i>Final Fantasy IX</i>	The Place I'll Return to Someday	Memories of Life	You're Not Alone	Towards that Hate	[Integrated into battle theme]	Victory Fanfare	Game Over	Zidane's Theme	Garnet's Theme
2000	<i>Skies of Arcadia</i>	Opening Theme	Main Theme	Theme of "Reflection"	Epilogue	[Sound Effect]	Victory in Battle	Defeat in Battle	Vyse's Theme	Fina's Theme
2001	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	The Prelude	To Zanarkand	Isn't it Wonderful?	Ending Theme	[Sound Effect]	Victory Fanfare	Game Over	Tidus' Theme	Yuna's Theme
2001	<i>Golden Sun</i>	Prologue		A Little Friendship	To be Continued	[Integrated into battle theme]	✓	✓		
2002	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Simple and Clean (Hikari)	Dearly Beloved	Always on my Mind	March Caprice for Piano and Orchestra			[Sound Effect]		Kairi I
2002	<i>Unlimited Saga</i>	Unlimited SaGa Overture - The Seven Wayfarers		Liberation	Finale	[Sound Effect]	Victory		Kurt's Theme	Laura's Theme
2003	<i>Final Fantasy X-2</i>	Eternity - Memory of Lightwaves		Yuna's Ballad	Ending	[Sound Effect]	Mission Complete	Game Over		Yuna's Theme
2003	<i>Tales of Symphonia</i>	Prologue	Tales of Symphonia	Revival	Thank You All	[Sound Effect]	Victory	Nobody Knows	Lloyd	Colette
2004	<i>Monster Hunter</i>	Monster Hunter	To the Adventurers	Beneath all the Stars in the Sky	Proof of a Hero		Triumph	Reparations for an Error		
2004	<i>Arc the Lad: End of Darkness (Generation)</i>	The Beginning of the Adventure	Theme of Arc the Lad	A Father and Daughter's Bond	Land of Good Harvest		✓	✓	Edda - Departure	Kirika: Remains of the Dream
2005	<i>Kingdom Hearts II</i>	Passion	Dearly Beloved	Friends in my Heart	Fantasia all marcia				Sora	Kairi
2005	<i>Grandia III</i>	The Legendary Pilot King	Theme of Grandia III	Feel the Love of Eternity	Thank You...	[Sound Effect]	✓	[Sound Effect]	Yuki & Rotts	Alfina's Theme
2006	<i>Final Fantasy XII</i>	Opening Movie (Theme of Final Fantasy XII)		Symphonic Poem "Hope"	Ending Movie		Victory Fanfare FFXII Version	Game Over		Penelo's Theme
2006	<i>Blue Dragon</i>	Waterside	Main Theme	A Smiling Face	Blue Dragon Main Theme	[Integrated into battle theme]	✓	✓		Zola's Theme
2007	<i>Eternal Sonata</i>	Remember Me/Think of Me	Jewel of the Heart	Shape of Life	Koutenka	[Sound Effect]	✓	✓		Salsa's Theme
2007	<i>Lost Odyssey</i>	Prologue	Main Theme	A Sign of Hope	Light of Blessing - A Letter	[Sound Effect]	Victory	✓		Seth's Theme
2008	<i>Tales of Vesperia</i>	Ring a Bell	The Dawn of Departure	Serenade of Vesperia	Soaring to a New World	[Sound Effect]	Victory Cry	✓		
2008	<i>Valkyria Chronicles</i>	No Matter the Distance... (Game)	Main Theme	Succeeded Wish	No Matter the Distance... (Game)		✓	Defeat		

		Opening ver.)			Ending ver.)					
2009	Final Fantasy XIII	Prelude to Final Fantasy XIII	The Promise	Miracles	Ending Credits	[Integrated into battle theme]	Glory's Fanfare	Game Over	Snow's Theme	Lightning's Theme
2009	Dragon Quest IX	Overture	[Same as Opening]	Sandy's Tears	Journey to the Star-Filled Skies	[Integrated into battle theme]	[Monophonic ascending C major scale on a sin wave timbre]	✓		Sandy's Theme
2010	Record of Agarest War 2	Antiphona	A Breath of Mountain	Indulge in Reminiscences	Final Track	[Sound Effect]	Victory!	Game Over		
2010	Nier	Shadowlord	Snow in Summer	His Dream	Ashes of Dreams / Nouveau			[Sound Effect]	Emil / Karma	Kaine / Salvation
2011	Tales of Xillia	Opening [JUDE]	Tales of Xillia	Wishing for a Dear World	Their Steps, and the Present	[Sound Effect]	Delight in Victory	✓	Jude's Theme - Determination	Milla's Theme - Mission
2011	The Last Story	✓	Theme of THE LAST STORY	Just Being Near You	Toberu mono			✓		
2012	Final Fantasy XIII-2	Final Fantasy XIII-2 Overture	Wish	Memories of the Future	Ending Roll	[Sound Effect]	Glorious Fanfare	Empty Solitude	Noel's Theme	Serah's Theme - Memory
2012	Bravely Default	Four Legends	Moving Toward Hope	Recollection is a Nostalgic Melody	Ballade to Hope	[Sound Effect]	Victory's Delight	✓		
2013	Ni No Kuni	[Same as Main Theme]	Main Theme	Miracle - Reunion	Kokoro No Kakera	[Sound Effect]	✓	✓		
2013	Monster Hunter 4	✓	Main Theme	One Song	Ending		Quest Clear Theme	✓	Elite Hunters	
2014	Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII	The Final 13 Days	Lightning Returns	Meeting You	Credits - Light Eternal		Salvation's Fanfare	[Sound Effect]	Noel's Theme - The Shadow Hunter	Lightning's Theme - Distant Light
2014	Atelier Shallie: Alchemists of the Dusk Sea	Rusty Sky (Opening version)	Rusty Sky	Youth Music Box	Last Wanderlust	[Sound Effect]	Until My Task is Complete	✓		Sea of Sand - Shallistera
2015	Tales of Zestiria	Kaze no Uta		Memories Coloring the Journey	The Land is Freed	[Sound Effect]	Victory Fanfare #1	✓	Sorey's Theme - Purity	Alisha's Theme
2015	Final Fantasy Type-0	Type-0	Tempus Bellum	The Forlorn Heart	Zero	[Sound Effect]	Victory Fanfare	[Game Over Scene]	Machina Kunagiri	Rem Tokimiya
2016	Final Fantasy XV	✓	Somnus	Dewdrops at Dawn	Main Theme from FINAL FANTASY	[Integrated into battle theme]	Victory Fanfare	End of the Road	NOCTIS	LUNA
2016	Tales of Berseria	Tales of Berseria	Main Theme	Velvet's Hope	People Living in the World	[Sound Effect]	Victory Theme	✓	Theme of Laphicet	Theme of Velvet
2017	Valkyria: Azure Revolution	Azure Revolution	[Same as Opening]	To the End of Deep Sorrow	Eternal Rest		Mission Complete	✓	Sabanaci & Company	
2017	Lost Sphear	Wiping Away Tears	The World of Memory	Echoes of the Heart	Light Sphear		Victory Fanfare	✓		
2018	Octopath Traveler	[Same as Main Theme]	Main Theme	Reminiscence	Ending Theme	[Sound Effect]	Victory Fanfare	✓	Olberic the Warrior	Ophelia the Cleric
2018	Ni No Kuni II: Revenant Kingdom	✓	Theme from Ni no Kuni II	There is Hope	Happily Ever After	[Sound Effect]	[Sound Effect]	Game Over		
2019	Fire Emblem: Three Houses	Seasons of Warfare	Fire Emblem: Three Houses Main Theme			[Sound Effect]	[Sound Effect]	Rematch		
2019	Kingdom Hearts III	Don't Think Twice [Orchestral Version]	Dearly Beloved	Lovely Little Moments	Don't Think Twice [Pop Version]			[Sound Effect]	Roxas' Return	
2020	Final Fantasy VII: Remake	The Prelude – Reunion	Main Theme – Sector 7 Undercity	Hollow Skies	Hollow		Victory Fanfare	Game Over		Aerith's Theme

Year	Game	Area					Action		
		Calm	Tense	Spiritual	Ethnically Diverse	Stately	Normal	Boss	Final Boss
1997	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Flowers Blooming in the Church	Mako Reactor	Forested Temple	Uutai Ruins	Fort Condor	Those Who Fight	Those Who Fight Further/Fight On!	One Winged Angel
1997	<i>Grandia</i>	The Sandy Beach of Gumbo	Dungeon 1	Underground Ruins	Dight Village	Garlyle	Battle 1	Dungeon 2 - Boss Battle Theme	
1998	<i>Jade Cocoon: Story of the Tamamayu</i>	Sirius Temple	Gate to the Binding World	The Promised Land - Khemel Temple		Gatewatcher of Time ni the Chief	Battle Drill	The One Who Stood in the Way	Battle Destiny
1998	<i>Xenogears</i>	My Village is Number One	Forest of the Black Moon	The Wounded Shall Advance into the Light	Dazil - City of Burning Sands		Stage of Death	Knight of Fire	Awakening
1999	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Balamb Garden	Galbadia Garden	Find Your Way [As used in Tomb of Unknown King]		Cactus Jack	Don't Be Afraid	Force Your Way	The Extreme
1999	<i>Chrono Cross</i>	Arni Village - Homeworld	Death Volcano	Garden of God	Termina - Another World	Dragon Knight	Between Life and Death	Fate - The God of Destiny	Dragon God
2000	<i>Final Fantasy IX</i>	Awakened Forest	Queen of the Abyss	The Chosen Summoner	Vamo'alla Flamenco	Decisive Action - Search for the Princess	Battle 1	Battle 2	Final Battle
2000	<i>Skies of Arcadia</i>	"Everyday Life" Theme	Theme of "Tension"	Ancient Temple Dungeon	Kingdom of Nasrad	Headquarters	Battle 1	Boss Battle (Crisis)	Last Battle
2001	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	Besaid Island	Gloom	Song of Prayer	Blazing Desert	Blitz Ball Gamblers	Battle	Challenge	The Final Battle
2001	<i>Golden Sun</i>	Vale	Gloomy Caves	The Elemental Stars	Desert Area	The Royal Palace	Battle!	Versus Saturos	Battle! Fusion Dragon
2002	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Destiny Islands	Strange Whispers	Dive Into the Heart Destati	Arabian Dream	Olympus Coliseum	Destiny's Force	Shrouding Dark Cloud	Guardando nel Buio
2002	<i>Unlimited Saga</i>						Battle Theme I	Battle Theme IV	BT Ultimate
2003	<i>Final Fantasy X-2</i>	Luca	Fuan	Temple	Kilika	Mt. Gagazet	YuRiPa, Fight! No. 1	YuRiPa, Fight! No. 3	Demise
2003	<i>Tales of Symphonia</i>	Old Familiar Scent of Iselia	Underground Passage	Spirits Whispers	Nova's Caravan	The Kingdom City of Meltokio	Fighting the Spirit	The Struggle to Survive	Final Destination
2004	<i>Monster Hunter</i>	Lands of Full Harvest	A Glint in the Eye - The Hunted	Song of an Old Tale	Burning Wind	The Gathering	Lioleus Howling	Gravimos - A Crack in the Earth	Gravimos - A Crack in the Earth
2004	<i>Arc the Lad: End of Darkness (Generation)</i>	Distant Horizon	Deep Forest	Core	Peisus Library	Town of Trials	Will to Fight	Reply	Swirling Evil Desires
2005	<i>Kingdom Hearts II</i>	Lazy Afternoons	Hesitation	Dive Into the Heart Destati	A Day in Agrabah	Olympus Coliseum	Tension Rising	The 13th Struggle	A Fight to the Death
2005	<i>Grandia III</i>	Anfog	Forest of Arcliff		Baccla	Great Man Schmitt	Tension 1	ATTACK OF A FLASH	GREAT ASSIZE
2006	<i>Final Fantasy XII</i>	Naivety	Infiltration	To the Place of the Gods		The Royal City of Rabanastre - City Ward Upper Stratum	Clash of Swords	Boss Battle	The Battle for Freedom
2006	<i>Blue Dragon</i>	Everyday Tranquility	The Ruined Village	The Mechanical Temple [Beginning]	Jibral Castle	Exceed the Land	Dragon Fight	Eternity	State of Emergency
2007	<i>Eternal Sonata</i>	Relaxing Place	Pressure	Where we end up		Dive into the Vast Expanse of Plains	Underground for Underhand	Spiral Twister	Scrap and Build Ourselves from Revolution
2007	<i>Lost Odyssey</i>	Saman, Town of Merchants	The Witch's Mansion			The Great Voyage	The Gun Barrel of Battle	A Formidable Enemy Appears!	Howl of the Departed
2008	<i>Tales of Vesperia</i>	Trends of the World	Unfulfilled Wish	Miracle in the City of Blossoms	Golden Sand Arabesque	Pledge to the Sword and Armor	Furnace of War	The Situation Grows Serious	The Final Showdown
2008	<i>Valkyria Chronicles</i>	Beautiful Gallia	Europa at War	Old Memory		Our Barracks	Gallant Fight	Hard Fight	Final Decisive Battle
2009	<i>Final Fantasy XIII</i>	A Brief Respite	Tension in the Air	Ragnarok		Nautilus	Blinded by Light	Fighting Fate	Born Anew
2009	<i>Dragon Quest IX</i>	Our Dreaming Town	Dungeon	Heaven's Prayer		The Palace Oboe	I Won't Lose	Demon Combat	The Time of the Decisive Battle
2010	<i>Record of Agarest War 2</i>	The Morning Sun	Deep Suspicion	Refresh Our Memory	King's Coming	Hold a Celebration	Power Struggle	Fire in the Lava	True End Boss Theme
2010	<i>Nier</i>	Hills of Radiant Winds	Cold Steel Coffin	Gods Bound by Rules			Shadowlord's Castle/Roar	Deep Crimson Foe	Shadowlord

2011	<i>Tales of Xillia</i>	A Beloved Hometown	Creeping Shadow	The Wavering Spirit World	A Lord's City Towering the Mountains	A Palace Bathed in Sunlight	Daring Sword	Life or Death	Battle for a Future to Believe In
2011	<i>Last Story</i>	Bathed in Light	The Dark Side	The Other Side of Oblivion		With Excitement in the Heart	Order and Chaos	Evil Beasts	The One Who Rules All
2012	<i>Final Fantasy XIII-2</i>	New Bodhum	Condition Omega	Missing Link		Academy's Theme	Eternal Fight	Time's Master	Heart of Chaos
2012	<i>Bravely Default</i>	The Land in Which You Begin	Cave of Darkness	Silence of the Forest		Sailing the Sea	Bell of Battle	Signs of an Enemy Territory	The Snake that Devours the Horizon
2013	<i>Ni No Kuni</i>	One Fine Morning	Tension		Al Mamoon - Court of the Cowlipha	The Cat King's Castle	Battle	Battle II	The Final Battle Against the White Witch
2013	<i>Monster Hunter 4</i>	Shinato Village	Underground Volcano	Song of Foundation	Old Desert Day	Ancestral Steppe	Battle Ancestral Steppe	Battle Fatalis	Battle Shagaru Magara
2014	<i>Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII</i>	A Carefree Existence	Altar of Light	The Cathedral	The Dead Dunes - Scorching Desert	The Last Surviving Wilderness	Crimson Blitz	The Showdown	Bhunivelze - Final Battle
2014	<i>Atelier Shallie: Alchemists of the Dusk Sea</i>	Abundant City of Water	Sand that is Bleeding	Sanctuary of Water	Sea of Sand - Desert	Derailment March	Stella - Part 1	Stop the Sand Dragon	Tide
2015	<i>Tales of Zestiria</i>	Unchanging Everyday	The Unclean	Within the Holy Tranquility		Lore of the Shepherd	Uphold Your Will with a Sword in Hand	Existence to be Feared	Chaotic Calamity That's One With a God
2015	<i>Final Fantasy Type-0</i>	A Day Like Another	Horror of the Abyss	Crystal Guide Us		Time of Tranquility	War: Pursuit	War: Warrior Worth a Thousand	Vermillion Fire
2016	<i>Final Fantasy XV</i>	Relax and Reflect	Creeping Shadows	In the Light of the Crystal	Altissa	Fantastica	Stand Your Ground	Hunt or be Hunted	Magna Insomnia
2016	<i>Tales of Berseria</i>	Nostalgic Hometown	Smoulder the Flame of Anger	The Sound of Silence	Southern Time Passes Slowly	The Brilliant Capital	Shout Your Soul	Daemon's Assault	The One Who Possesses the Power of God
2017	<i>Valkyria: Azure Revolution</i>	These Gentle Fields	Undue Power	Lacrimosa - Tears to Dust		Jutland Kingdom	Attack	Battle With Maxim	VALKYRIA - The Power of Destruction
2017	<i>Lost Sphear</i>	Nostalgia	Truth of Pain	The Moon Illuminates	Invitation for Curiosity	Loyalty to the Emperor	Surrounded	Struggle	The End of Myth
2018	<i>Octopath Traveler</i>	The Flatlands	Dark Caverns	The Trees Have Eyes		Atlasdam Seat of Learning	Battle I	Decisive Battle I	Daughter of the Dark God
2018	<i>Ni No Kuni II: Revenant Kingdom</i>	Carefree Days	Treacherous Valley	Kingmaker's Theme	City of Hunger	In the Kingdom of the Mice	Let Battle Commence	Boss Battle	The Final Showdown
2019	<i>Fire Emblem: Three Houses</i>	Respite and Sunlight	Those Who Sow Darkness	Garreg Mach Cathedral		The Leader's Path	Fodlan Winds (Rain)	Indomitable Will (Rain)	The Verge of Death (Rain)
2019	<i>Kingdom Hearts III</i>	Afternoon Streets	Happy Hair Day – Into the Forest Deep	Dive into the Heart – Destati		Mount Olympus	Swingin' Free	Tension Rising – Reaper's Revenge	Dark Domination
2020	<i>Final Fantasy VII: Remake</i>	On Our Way	Train Graveyard	Flowers Blooming in the Church	Wall Market: Madam M		Let the Battles Begin!: Remake	Hell House	One Winged Angel – Rebirth

Table 4.5 - Table of cues found in JRPGs to match the proposed 17 'templates'.

The table has been split into two to allow the information to be displayed on consecutive pages.

With 47 games listed, against seventeen templates, this offers 799 possible cells to be populated. As is to be expected however, not every example game listed completely matches the model as a whole and a brief breakdown of the table within *Microsoft Excel* reveals that 669 cells are filled creating an accuracy rate of 83.70% for the proposed new template model.

Beginning with the 'Special' category, several important conclusions can be drawn. The proposed difference between an opening theme which was originally the 'overture' within the *Dragon Quest* model is now unlikely to be the game's main theme and is instead a piece of music that often underscores an opening cutscene; sometimes underscoring the action on screen and sometimes merely setting the stylistic tone for the rest of the game. A sentimental or hopeful theme is apparent in almost every JRPG listed and a suggested cue that is distinct from WRPGs as will be shown in the following chapter. This particular cue reinforces the narrative qualities of JRPGs – a piece of music that is a 'happening' when referencing Chatman's theory. Perhaps too, is the sense that this track is a link to Kizzire and Ivănescu's nostalgia theories. To paraphrase a quote attributed to Carl W. Buehner (Evans, 1973, p. 244), a player might forget the details of a game, but they will never forget how it made them feel. This emotive cue is likely to inspire that emotional connection.

Additionally – and unsurprisingly – every game listed has an ending theme that concludes the story. What is more interesting however, are the three ludic cues: the stingers for entering combat, victory and defeat. Every game has a 'game over' stinger of some description – Bernard Suits' theory of what constitutes a game demands a way to fail and thus it becomes obvious that sound would be used to accompany the visual of failure. Where a victory fanfare – and in particular the entering combat stinger – do not feature in table 4.6 is generally due to their ludic design. These games are action-RPGs and there is no requirement to force the player to a different battle scene or remove them from the game world to look at any items or experience gained in battle.

With reference to character themes, there are substantially more character themes for female main characters than there are male – 65.96% to 46.81% respectively. Several reasons are suggested for this. Firstly, there are a few games in this list feature female protagonists only, for example *Final Fantasy X-2*. In this game's story, Yuna – the main female protagonist from the first game – is in a team with two other females, Riku and Paine. As such, no male entry to the male protagonist template is to be expected. A second explanation which would account for more of the percentage discrepancy is a similarity to *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope*. In the film, the main character Luke Skywalker does not have a dedicated theme for him, whereas Princess Leia – the principal female protagonist does. The film's main theme instead serves as the heroic accompanying music to Luke Skywalker each time the film's story demands it. Whilst there are various interpretations on this, this link can be made to JRPGs. In the vast majority of cases, the main character of the story is male who will go onto become the hero of the game. For those games which have female themes but not male, the usual explanation is that the game's story will make use of the main theme (or a variation of it) for him.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ This arguably bears a relation to Simone de Beauvoir's introduction titled 'Woman as Other' in her 1949 book *The Second Sex*.

A further point of consideration, can be the female protagonist's role within the game's narrative as to why these themes occur in a significantly higher percentage of games. Returning to Campbell's "Hero's Journey", the reward (the object that the hero desires) found in Act 2 can be the affection of another person. In 2002 for instance, it was reported that in a study of children aged between the ages of 8 – 18, boys spent more time on video games and TV than girls who in turn spent more time engaging with music and print media (Newkirk, 2002, p. 42). Assuming that a higher proportion of these adolescent males are heterosexual,¹²⁹ it is unsurprising that by playing as a male hero in fantasy video games, one of the main driving forces in the game is to rescue the princess – just as in the 1985 Japanese game *Super Mario Bros*. As shown in Chapter Two, early JRPGs were influenced greatly by CRPGs developed in the West and for these games, they would be influenced by texts such as Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* – this example for instance relegates female characters to background roles and has the principal male characters such as Aragorn and Sam eventually marrying their spouses (Arwen and Rosie respectively) after the quest is completed. From this, female characters are the ideal – the object that the male player wants to win and for these characters, they do not change throughout the story – they are the same before the quest as they are afterwards. Referencing these characters musically seems rational in this context rather than trying to represent the hero who undergoes the change that Campbell suggests. As narratives grew in complexity and away from the blank template of the original *Final Fantasy* however, this objectification diminishes until various JRPGs are to be found with female leads beginning with *Phantasy Star* before including more well-known titles such as *Persona 2*, *Tales of Berseria* and the *Final Fantasy XIII* trilogy. The latest JRPG by Square Enix at the time of writing for example – *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* – although features Cloud Strife as the main male protagonist, greatly expands the role of the female characters in the game and reflects this musically; an example being the character Jessie who gets her own theme whilst not being the object of Cloud's affections.¹³⁰

Additionally, whilst there were two further musical templates for characters proposed, there were not enough examples in these games to warrant more than a passing mention to them. These were the 'sidekick' themes (quirky and often humorous pieces of music used to represent the comic-relief character) in addition to a theme for the antagonist themselves. However, these occurred in substantially less than 40% of the games in the table above suggesting whilst these may be a trend, they were not defining of the genre of a JRPG.

Within "Areas", templates for 'Calm', 'tense' and 'stately' are represented almost completely – in much the same way as 'town', 'dungeon' and 'castle' were in the *Dragon Quest* model. The use of the two other templates offers a number of points of discussion. Music accompanying "Exploratory - Spiritual Areas" is

¹²⁹ The UK Office for National Statistics' document "Sexual Identity, UK: 2015" states that of the UK population, 1.7% identify themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) and was the earliest document of its type in the UK.

¹³⁰ Whilst Jessie is extremely flirty with you across much of the game and there is a scene where the player can suggest they will call round to see her after a mission, I would argue that the two main love interests are either Tifa or Aerith.

found in 91.49% of the games listed; a link perhaps to the fantastical aspects of the narratives to these JRPGs. Amongst the dominant religions of Japan are Shintoism and Buddhism. Followers of both of these religions make use of shrines and charms in their prayers to spirits. Alicia Ong in her paper “The Religions behind Final Fantasy” describes that religious symbolism is found in many JRPGs and in particular the *Final Fantasy* series. Whilst the roots of these religious items are often opaque or players are simply ignorant of the cultural influences behind them, they are ‘able to appreciate it emotionally’ (Ong, 2001). This in turn draws unconscious symbolism that higher powers – or more powerful magic – should be revered. As such, by way of reverence, prayer is the most common form; literally using the human voice to revere – often in sacred places. These – according to B.A. Robinson in his article on Shintoism – can be mountains, or springs and nature itself is to be revered (Robinson, 2013). From a musical perspective, the voice is the most natural of instruments and can revere in prayer. As Gerardus Van der Leeuw wrote ‘almost all worship uses music... religion can no more do without singing than it can without the word’ (Leeuw, 1938, pp. 211 – 262). Therefore, it is of no surprise that so many fantasy JRPGs have these spiritual areas within them.

The ‘Exploratory – Ethnically Diverse Area’ cues are not as prevalent as the other areas, but at 59.57% are represented more often than they are not. These cues are often a pastiche on Middle Eastern styles of music and often are used to represent desert-type areas. This is proposed as a cultural diffusion of sound; ideas drawn from Western music exoticism. Whilst this is an area that requires far more investigation than can be adequately given in this thesis, it is entirely possible to see the evolution of the multi-step appropriation of ideas – particularly from the West – found within manga and anime before filtering into Japanese video game music and thus creating pastiches of Middle-Eastern music. There are exceptions to this Middle Eastern style however; *Final Fantasy IX* for instance has a Spanish flamenco pastiche for its track “Vamo' alla Flamenco” and *Tales of Xillia* has an arguably Tibetan pastiche for its track “A Lord’s City Towering the Mountains”. Nevertheless, it is perhaps due to JRPGs’ diverse story settings that an overall homogenous style to its music does not exist and so appropriation is often apparent. To further reinforce this, a quote by Shoji Meguro – the composer of *Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner 2* can be cited. This game is set in the Taishō era of Japan (1912 - 1926) to which Meguro is recorded saying:

In the opening, the use of the shakuhachi, which is an end-blown bamboo flute, serves to convey a sense of the period. I think that for a lot of people the impression it leaves is very clear. In my judgment, the use of this instrument alone is enough to conjure up a sense of the Taisho era (Meguro, 2009).

No attempt is made at period – or indeed cultural – accuracy other than the use of one instrument which stands in stark contrast to composers such as Jack Wall for his *Jade Empire* RPG (shown in Chapter Three).

Finally, for the “Combat” cues, these are present in 100% of the games listed: a clear example of Suits’ obstacles that players must overcome. The *Dragon Quest* model proposes two: a battle and a final battle,

but as shown, non-final bosses are also now universally accepted within the ludic genre of the JRPG. Indeed, mid-game boss fights have been in games since the 1980s (for example *The Legend of Zelda*), and thus I propose that these should be separated from 'Battle' and 'Final Battle' for as the game's stories increased in complexity, these boss battle themes often came to reflect characterisations of the respective boss, feeding into the game's narrative as a whole rather than being just a mere obstacle to overcome.

My proposed seventeen templates include ludic-specific stingers not included in the *Dragon Quest* model. Whilst the sample size is relatively small – 47 games is only a fraction of the number of JRPGs shown in section 1.3 – the results clearly favour the suggested model which in turn link back to Chatman's theory of a narrative; namely by including character cues as an additional form of musical expression within these games. It will be interesting to see whether JRPGs of the future continue to fit within it.

4.7 Conclusion

Japanese Role-Playing Games are unarguably a melting pot of ideas. Whilst they are a ludic genre in their own right and have evolved as a result of purely Japanese development, they could not exist without both Western and other international influences. Developed initially as a result of the move from table-top role-playing games with the early CRPG *Dragon and Princess*, they led the way in the development of this genre after the Western console stock market crash in the early 1980s. This gave way to *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy* diverting in their own evolution as compared to Western RPGs. Accused of stagnation in the mid-2000s (Schules, Peterson & Picard, 2018, p. 121), a renaissance is apparent as Japanese developers not only turn to their back-catalogue in an effort to update, remaster and remake games from the genre's heyday of the 1990s, but also look to WRPGs and other ludic genres. Games such as *Nier: Automata* and *Octopath Traveler* as two games at either end of the JRPG spectrum (being an Action-RPG and turn-based RPG respectively) have been both critically and commercially acclaimed. However, these games have not just developed as a result of influences within the video game industry alone. Rather, they have drawn inspiration from other mass-media in Japan such as manga and anime with artists and composers often moving between these similar industries and thus pushing growth across them all.

The music to these games is no exception. The homogenous and usually orchestral scores of WRPGs often seem stale in comparison to the myriad of possibilities found in the JRPG and – has been argued above – is without a doubt thanks to the countless ways 'fantasy' is interpreted in Japanese stories. Additionally, as has been shown in section 3.5.2 within the proposed 'templates' found in JRPGs, there is often to be found at least one culturally-diverse track which draws upon the influences of a real-world locale; often from the Middle East, but not always. Jazz is readily incorporated and games such as *Final Fantasy XV* showcase a variety of other US styles within it. Pop and other lighter musical styles are fused with the 'high-art' orchestral traditions to create something that is arguably unique to this genre. Composers such as Koichi Sugiyama moved from scoring for anime to scoring for video games. Nobuo Uematsu has dabbled in composing for

anime whilst starting off as a video game composer for JRPGs whilst Joe Hisaishi has dabbled in video games – namely the *Ni no Kuni* series – a JRPG. Numerous other composers too have moved between the two forms of multimedia such as Keiichi Okabe, Yasunori Mitsuda, Masashi Hamauzu and many others, bringing their experience from one to another and enriching both.

Finally, we can return to the thesis' central question: that of coherence. As has been described, there is a certain degree of illogicality within the narrative and visuals of many JRPG titles. Consequently, to maintain a homogenous score throughout with one fixed timbral force (namely an orchestra) or one particular style, would be inconsistent with the stylistically varied other elements that the player is experiencing. Instead, just as anime had done before it, JRPGs became stylistically and timbrally non-homogenous and by doing so I argue that this is what creates coherence in their musical scores.

CHAPTER 5:

MUSIC IN SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY WESTERN RPGs

5.1 Background

‘Whatever the sales potential of *Dungeons & Dragons*, it is apparent that it has had a dramatic impact on the gaming “industry” writes Gary Fine (2001, p. 15). As discussed in Chapter Two, the computer role-playing game did indeed develop out of table top games such as *D&D* into WRPGs and JRPGs. However, the evolution is much easier to appreciate between western CRPGs and their table top counterparts and this stylistical evolution forms much of the basis of this chapter. By doing so, an understanding should arise as to what makes a coherent score in this subcategory of the CRPG ludic-genre.

To confirm, this chapter is deliberately designed as a mirror to Chapter Four, drawing parallels to theories and finding described there. Much less explanation and background are covered if they have already been described in Chapter Four and so it is particularly important to read both chapters in order. Given the expansion on what makes a JRPG in section 4.1, it is therefore appropriate to expand on the definition set out in section 1.3.2 as to what makes a WRPG. Consequently, this thesis uses blogger Nick B’s (2018) succinct definition headings. He states that it will have:

- A campaign-style narrative
- An immersive world to explore
- Stats and Skills
- Progression
- Choice and Consequences
- Systems-based Gameplay

Kevin Schut supports these headings. In his essay *Desktop Conquistadors: Negotiating American Manhood in the Digital Fantasy Role-Playing Game*, he writes:

Exploration is one of the key game activities... magnificent temples and palaces... beautiful giant forests, and mouldy old dungeons... Exploration is usually a violent ordeal, as it is often impossible to pass through a territory without cleansing it of its native inhabitants, such as hostile orcs, dangerous trolls, poisonous giant spiders, undead skeletons, and the like. Although some creatures and people within these imaginary worlds are perfectly peaceful, the players’ characters cannot avoid fights for the whole game – this is one of the key features, something that sells the game (Schut, 2006, p. 113).

Many critics, fans and commentators often eschew the “W” of Western Role-Playing Games when referring to this genre of video game leaving a slightly oblique abbreviation in comparison to a Japanese Role-Playing Game which is always a JRPG. Stylistically, there is arguably an expectation of what the game will involve. Robert Grosso writes that WRPG will have a ‘fantastical setting that relies heavily on European folklore and literature, such as J.R.R. Tolkien’ (Grosso, 2015). Winifred Phillips expands on this suggesting that in WRPGs ‘the environments tend to be darkly atmospheric and the player tends to be free to go anywhere without becoming constricted by the demands of the linear storyline’ (Phillips, 2014, p. 88). Whilst I take exception to the word ‘anywhere’, the broad point is valid. William Gibbons also adds to the overarching view of a WRPG suggesting that they have ‘dark, “realistic” fantasy worlds’ (Gibbons, 2017, p. 413).

What becomes clear with these explanations of what makes a fantasy WRPG is that narrative and ludic style are often synonymous with one another in that narratively the vast majority of games use a Western medieval-style fantasy world which does not shy away from dark realism. For its gameplay, a WRPG focuses upon exploration and combat within this world that revolves around the often-singular protagonist who may or may not be accompanied by a variety of companions which again may or may not be player-created. As such, it could then be argued that if exploration through such detailed environments is of such importance, then this becomes part of the game’s core narrative.

5.2 Advancing the Story

Continuing to follow Chatman’s model of the components of a narrative laid down in Chapter One, we can mirror the discussion led in Chapter Four to focus on the advancing the story within a WRPG.

5.2.1 Narrative Elements

Eduardo Barbosa Lima suggests that ‘[t]he Heroic Epic is one of the oldest narrative forms recorded in history whereas WRPGs are one of the newest forms of storytelling made possible due to the advancements in technology in the 20th century. Yet... there are some significant chronotopic similarities and overlaps between the two, including the WRPGs internalization of the Heroic Epic past’ (Lima, 2016, pp. 125 – 126). Angela Jane Weisl and Tison Pugh concur, suggesting that ‘on a narratological level, many “medieval” videogames descend directly from the romance tradition, in which knightly protagonists dispatch various monsters and villains before triumphing over a final enemy’ (Weisl & Pugh, 2012, p. 123). Their statement marries perfectly with Campbell’s “Hero’s Journey” further strengthening the argument initially presented in section 1.5.1. Not only that, but it also serves as a clear example of the relationship between the heroic epic and the ludic elements of WRPGs: the plot of the heroic epic is outlined to a degree that the ludic elements fit neatly into place – exploration and combat of lesser threats until finally a ‘final boss’ is confronted.

From their earliest inception, western fantasy role-playing games in their broadest sense have typically focused on the acts and deeds of their central hero – usually the player-controlled character – and less about their internal feelings. This is undoubtedly the reflection of the heroic epic that Lima discusses which often has gone on to be known as high fantasy. The setting of this heroic epic will typically be a simplified version of the western European Middle Ages (Zahorski & Boyer, 1986, pp. 62 – 63). One reason as to why this has continued to remain the case in western fantasy – and by association W RPGs – is as C.W. Sullivan III writes; ‘Tolkien the high-fantasy writer knew that, before a work of high fantasy could be taken seriously, the author had to create a world that was real, a world of logical internal cohesiveness, within the pages of the story’ (Sullivan, 2004).¹³¹ By basing it on a period of history already known with just the inclusion of a few extra fantastical creations, the world and thus its story become far easier to accept. The setting of the Middle Ages – or Medieval Period – within western fantasy videogames coincides with another ‘age’ – the Dark Ages. During this time, much of Europe suffered destruction of towns and other settlements by Germanic tribes after the fall of the Roman Empire. As such, there is a dearth of scholarly knowledge during this time¹³² and this period of relative unenlightenment lends itself well to incorporating another form of genre fiction; horror. Myths such as the Arthurian legend which originate in this time often accompany the notions of feudalism, fantasy (with Merlin the Magician) and horror through creatures such as the Questing Beast or “Beast Glatisant” – a chimera combining features of a snake, lion, leopard and deer. Even today, horror and fantasy coincide, for example, children will often hear and some will imagine a ‘monster under the bed’. Horror plays off primal fears and incorporating twisted versions of fairy tale creatures, religious figures or ancient epic monsters becomes easily acceptable when placing them in an already established world.

Dungeons & Dragons took this simplified medieval-European world, added its signature fantasy and horror elements and ran with it; a clear evolution over what been established by Tolkien and his contemporaries. As such, with most early CRPGs being *D&D* ported over to the screen, the establishment of this world setting design-choice was established and has not really waned since then. This has led to a very homogenous style of world-setting; no matter whether the game is *Wizardry*, *Baldur’s Gate*, *Gothic*, *Oblivion*, *Dragon Age*, *Torchlight*, *Fable*, *Pillars of Eternity*; all of these examples of W RPGs have this same world setting in which to push the game’s story forward in a heroic epic style. That said, there are W RPGs that pride themselves on having intricate characters with which the player can interact, befriend, gain side quests from and even romance. BioWare – the company behind many of the most critically acclaimed W RPGs – has for a long time been synonymous with this kind of story-telling. Consider the back cover from the box art to their 1998 game *Baldur’s Gate*, shown in Fig. 5.1:

¹³¹ This is in stark contrast to the illogicality within the narratives of many anime and JRPGs as discussed throughout this thesis.

¹³² Although scholarship would continue in monasteries.

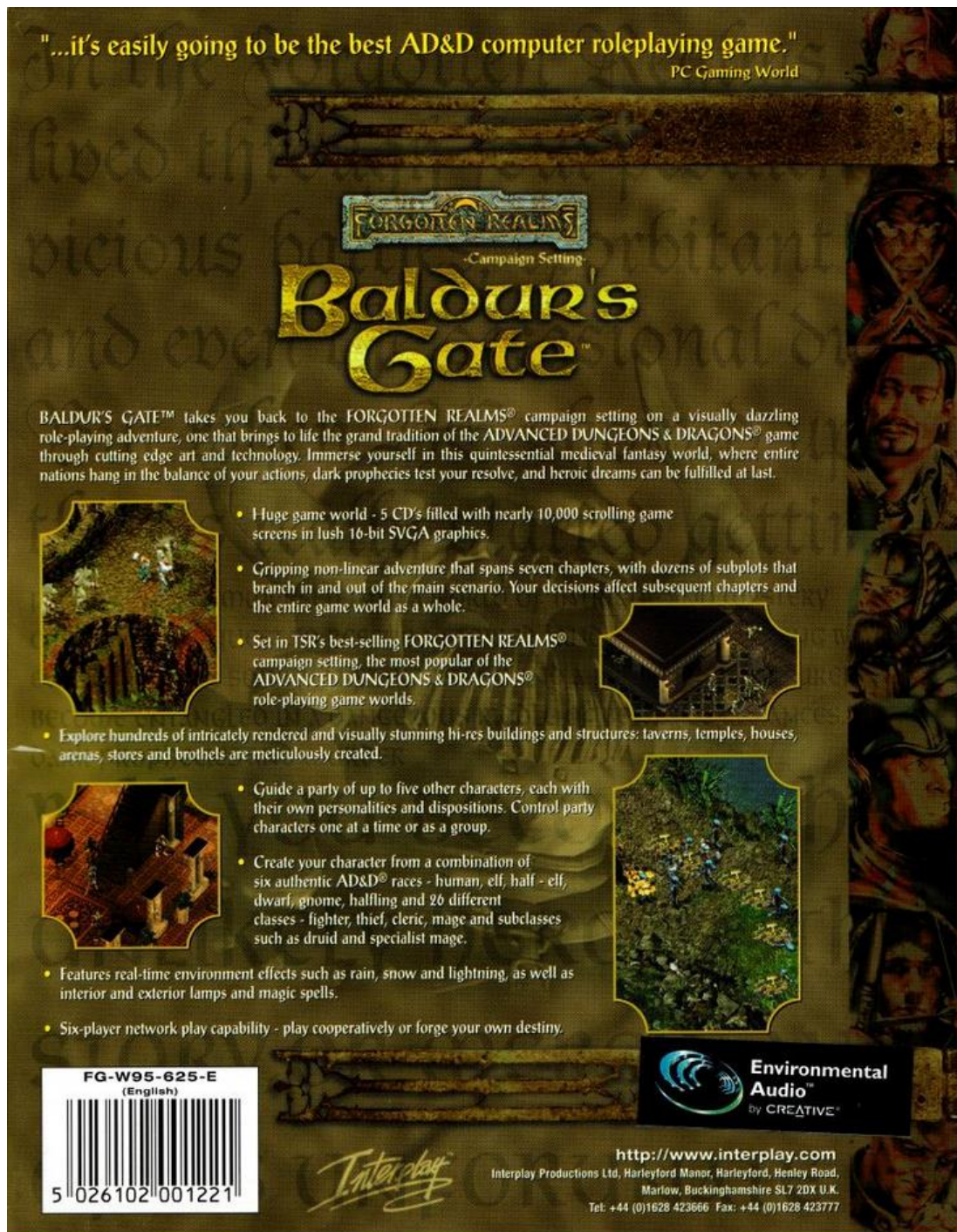


Fig. 5.1 – The Back Cover from the Box Art to the WRPG *Baldur's Gate*

Note the fifth bullet point: "Guide a party of up to five other characters, each with their own personalities and dispositions." BioWare has long prided itself on creating games that have these intricate characters that voice their opinions during exploration and give unique battle cries during combat. Nevertheless, I argue that even in BioWare games, not to mention wider WRPGs, the main character – generally created by the player – has companions and non-playable characters in their orbit, rather than those characters being essential to the overarching narrative. In contrast, many JRPGs where whilst there is a 'main' character, supporting characters are essential to the overall plot and will often be forced upon the player as the main-playable

character during certain scenes (for example Aerith, Tifa and Barret in *Final Fantasy VII: Remake*). In WRPGs, they are arguably there to give personality to mobile weapons whilst the overarching narrative is influenced and depends upon the main character's actions. Unsurprisingly therefore, there have been few fantasy WRPGs that contain character themes – instead relying on environmental scores during interactions. There are exceptions of course: *Dragon Age II* stands out as one fantasy CRPG Bioware has developed that does contain character themes. Amongst non-BioWare games such as *Planescape: Torment* – as shown in Chapter Two – do contain thematic material specifically for other companions. Nevertheless, on the whole, WRPGs containing character themes are generally few and far between.

5.2.2 The Use of the Cutscene

Like with JRPGs, WRPGs also use cutscenes to push the story forwards. Their use however, is more fragmentary than in JRPGs; some game series have used them more than others. Using *YouTube*, it is possible to see the amalgamation of all a games cutscenes into one video. *The Elder Scrolls* use of cutscenes for instance has decreased since *Morrowind* until with the latest game *Skyrim* (as of June 2019) barely having any. *Dragon Age* on the other hand has roughly stayed consistent with the amount it has being around 45-50 minutes in total duration. The *Divinity Original Sin* series has substantially less whereas the *Diablo* series features more – particularly *Diablo III*. The irony of this particular use of advancing narrative is that for all of WRPGs homogeny in other aspects (explained below), their use of cutscenes is particularly fragmented.

5.3 A Homogenous Musical Style

Returning to the canonical study shown in Chapter Two and Three, it is clear that both developers and players of WRPGs are particularly accustomed to a homogenous orchestral sound. Biographers have observed this for many years when writing about Western composers. Take Jeremy Soule's scores for fantasy CRPGs. As is shown, his compositional output is prolific since the mid-1990s with *Secret of Evermore* however, many of them share a timbral homogeny. For his response to the announcement as composer for *Morrowind* he writes, '[t]he stunning epic quality of the Elder Scrolls series is particularly compatible with the grand, orchestral style of music I enjoy composing the most' (Soule, 2001). In another interview he adds that 'there really isn't a big difference in symphonic music between a [Hollywood] film and a game' (Soule, 2007c).¹³³ It is also worth highlighting how many WRPG scores – particularly first in the series – that Soule has composed:¹³⁴

- *Icewind Dale*
- *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*

¹³³ The use of the orchestra for films – especially with regards to western fantasy films – is further discussed in more detail below.

¹³⁴ Whilst *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* is not fantasy and *Guild Wars* is an MMORPG, it was felt appropriate to draw attention to them in this context for they both use the orchestral scores mentioned.

- *Dungeon Siege*
- *Morrowind*
- *Neverwinter Nights*
- *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*
- *Guild Wars*

For each of these games, sequels have been developed for which the scores have all been timbrally and stylistically similar. Whilst it is hard to quantify the exact level of impact Soule's scores have had upon the music to WRPGs, his music is likely to have at least in part influenced those scores of his contemporaries. Jeremy Soule is but one example of a game composer utilising an orchestral score based on the 'epic fantasy cinema scores' that Gibbons mentions. As stated in Chapter Two, the main theme to *Fable* was composed by Danny Elfman who demanded an orchestra to perform it with Russell Shaw writing the rest of the game's score in that particular style. Inon Zur is the composer of several other notable WRPGs:

- *Baldur's Gate II: Throne of Bhaal*
- *Icewind Dale II*
- *Champions of Norath**
- *Dragon Age: Origins**
- *The Lord of the Rings: War in the North*
- *Dragon's Dogma*
- *Pathfinder: Kingmaker*

Once again, Zur – as such a prolific composer – has undoubtedly had at least some impact upon the direction of WRPg score-design with the above games marked with * having multiple sequels. In an interview, Zur states that 'many projects call for synthetic elements, but many of them have a Hollywood aura to them so they need this orchestral power behind them' (Zur, 2017b). A press announcement by EA for *Dragon Age: Origins* reads 'with a powerful original score recorded by the acclaimed Northwest Sinfonia Orchestra, Inon Zur's dramatic soundtrack to Dragon Age: Origins is the perfect complement to the game's epic, cinematic qualities, full of soaring melodies and lush, emotional orchestrations' (EA, 2009).

Whilst their works are not identical – Zur as noted in Chapter Three composed many thematic cues within games such as *Dragon Age II* in comparison to Soule's more ambient style – they are at least similar or at least much more similar than comparable JRPGs and this is also true for their choices of timbre. These composers are suitably noted by critics and scholars alike for their compositional output but also their "cinematic sound design" when it comes to the stylistic writing for their games and in particular the CRPGs they work on. Bongiovanni reinforces these points on the aspects of variety when he writes:

Using film studies as a disciplinary lens has considerable merit when one considers the propensity for modern game developers to focus a game's audio-visual aesthetic on establishing cinematic realism with the latest technologies. Some games are even referred to as 'blockbuster' franchises by fans, developers, and scholars, demonstrating how deeply ingrained the cinematic vocabulary is within the video game industry (Bongiovanni, 2017, pp. 159 – 160).

Yet the question remains as to why WRPGs have this obsession with cinematic sound design. What is it about this particular ludic-genre that demands such uniformity? Bongiovanni continues:

Cinematic conventions have conditioned audiences to expect certain sound that, while seemingly realistic, is actually a constructed sound (ibid, p. 174).

5.4 Cultural Influence

'If you wish to emulate Mel Gibson, you should probably try a Western RPG', says Lindsey Weedston (2011). This single statement reveals a lot about the influence that Hollywood cinema has had upon WRPGs and as a result, its music as well. As a young art form that was ever evolving thanks to increases in computer hardware, both art and music departments from western developers looked to the closest form of media available to them; Hollywood cinema.

5.4.1 Western Classical Music Tradition

Examples of fantasy and the fantastical being represented through music are found throughout western classical music. From the works of Henry Purcell and his incidental music for *Oedipus*, Mozart's singspiel *Die Zauberflöte*, or Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, there have always been examples of music accompanying fantastical stories. Joep Leerssen writes:

Between 1780 and 1840 a huge rediscovery of the early medieval vernacular roots and rootedness of the various European languages and literatures took place, in a process that reverberated back and forth between the fields of philology, antiquarianism, and imaginative literature. It revolutionized the European self-image and historical consciousness and led to the national diffraction of the Enlightenment's idea of culture and literature. Instead of one European culture cradled in classical antiquity, people came to envisage a plurality of European cultures, each rooted in the nation's vernacular and tribal origins (Leerssen, 2004, p. 221).

Distilling this to a list of examples suggests that Romanticism is a rediscovery of the medieval period of Europe, complete with rival kingdoms; this clearly links with Zahorski & Boyer's earlier statement. Works by authors such as ETA Hoffmann for example proved extremely influential both on the public and on composers (Brittan, 2017, p. 14) creating thematic stylisations that were quickly assimilated. Take Wagner for example. Much has been written on his influence upon film music and Tim Summers has continued this theme with

regards to video game compositions. To expand however, let us examine Wagner's use of story within his Ring Cycle.

Wagner took license to blend folk mythology with landscapes of his nineteenth century. The sagas and epics were dated, though how much was known of past environments at the time of his writing is uncertain. German audiences of his day were attuned to nature and rural settings, and Wagner's stage instructions conformed in good measure to a natural and rural world with which audiences could readily identify. On the operatic stage Wagner created a remarkable interrelatedness of music and geography. As an artist he was unfettered by the conventions of what-then or now-would be considered good geography; he plumbed the geography of his own imagination, projecting his works against the background of the mythical landscapes that inhabited his librettos... Nine of his operas have rustic pastoral settings with visually believable scenery, in which actors are silhouetted against formidable geological formations, forests, or raging seas (Stenberg, 1998, p. 330).

There is a significant amount of correlation between Stenberg's analysis of Wagner's use of music and geography and C.W. Sullivan's discussion on believable worlds. WRPGs too have much as what Stenberg discusses; natural and rural worlds, mythical landscapes, forests, geological formations and raging seas – often with their own specific styles of music to match.

Isabella van Elferen's 2013 article "Fantasy Music: Epic Soundtracks, Magical Instruments, Musical Metaphysics" lists many examples of uses of fantasy within classical music, for example, the Queen of the Night's aria in Mozart's *Magic Flute*. However, there are some omissions to the influences that would come to affect fantasy music in general. We should start with Mendelssohn and his music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This incidental music – to the Shakespeare play of the same name – began life as an overture before becoming part of the incidental music for a production of a play. Amongst the most notable fantastical elements of the piece are the scampering fairy feet of Puck – the mischievous sprite - at the beginning of the overture played using fast moto perpetuo quavers on the violins with only brief interjections of woodwind and horn. Similarly, E.T.A Hoffman's 1816 story *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* was given new life by the Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's ballet *The Nutcracker* which premiered in December 1892. The score is notable for its highly varied use of timbre and particularly the celesta in "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" – an instrument that would become a staple of fantasy film scores, arguably most notable in John Williams' "Hedwig's Theme" for his *Harry Potter* score (see section 5.4.3). Like with Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky also makes use of the upper register through the woodwind section; this time to represent the doll-like fantasy world and the magic of Christmas it tries to convey.

The two examples so far are both musical imaginings of fairy tales. For a more heroic epic, then there must be mention of music to represent gods - or more specifically – planets named after them. Gustav Holst wrote "The Planets" as a seven-movement orchestral suite between 1914 and 1916. Within this suite, Holst

attempts to represent the planets by their relations to the Roman gods after they are named rather than anything scientific. Much has been mentioned of the suite's relationship to John Williams' *Star Wars* – after all, the temp track for the film was extracts from the suite – but its influence upon wider fantasy is still under-researched. There is not time in this chapter to go into substantial detail in order to change this, however, it is worth highlighting some key features. Consider the movement names within the suite:

1. Mars, the Bringer of War
2. Venus, the Bringer of Peace
3. Mercury, the Winged Messenger
4. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
5. Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
6. Uranus, the Magician
7. Neptune, the Mystic

As stated, the second-half of the movement titles are named after the Roman gods. These are all typical traits found in heroic-epics. Large battles, magic, scouts, mysticism, messengers, love and peace – these are themes understandable by any consumer of western-fantasy. To help represent this within music, Holst employs a typically large late-Romantic orchestra – very similar in its makeup to what Tchaikovsky used in *The Nutcracker* – for his desired timbral effects:

Family	Tchaikovsky – <i>The Nutcracker</i>	Holst – <i>The Planets</i>
Woodwind	3 flutes (2/3 double on picc.)	4 flutes (3/4 on picc. / alto flute)
	2 oboes	3 oboes
	1 Cor Anglais	1 Cor Anglais
	2 clarinets in Bb and A	3 clarinets in Bb and A
	1 bass clarinet in Bb	1 bass clarinet in Bb
	2 bassoons	3 bassoons
		1 contrabassoon
Brass	4 horns in F	6 horns in F
	2 trumpets in Bb and A	4 trumpets in C
	2 trombones	2 trombones
	1 bass trombone	1 bass trombone
	1 tuba	1 tuba
		1 tenor tuba/euphonium
Percussion	Timpani	Timpani
	Snare Drum	Snare Drum
	Cymbals	Cymbals
	Bass Drum	Bass drum
	Triangle	Triangle
	Tambourine	Tambourine
	Castanets	Tubular Bells
	Tam-tam	Xylophone
	Glockenspiel	Glockenspiel
	“Toy instruments”	
Keyboards	Celesta	Celesta
		Organ
Voice	SA choir	SSA choir
Strings	2 harps	2 harps
	Violin I / II	Violin I / II
	Viola	Viola
	Cello	Cello
	Double Bass	Double Bass

Table 5.1 – Timbral Similarities between *The Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky and *The Planets* by Holst.

Despite the fact that the two were written over twenty years apart, in different countries and one is for a fairy tale ballet whereas the other is for a musical representation of Roman gods, the timbral similarity is remarkable; particularly in the choice of instruments within the percussion, keyboard, and vocal families. Their similarities cannot be overstated; in order to represent fantasy – be it heroic epic or fairy tale – tradition had demanded even by the turn of the twentieth-century that upper register voices, celesta, glockenspiel and harp be incorporated.

“Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune” by Claude Debussy is another work based on a piece of literature; Stéphane Mallarmé’s poem “Afternoon of a Faun” in which the creature of Greek legend - a half-man, half-goat – awakens to revel in memories of forest nymphs. Again, the link to an existing narrative is important; a composer is trying to represent the fantastical through music. Whilst the orchestration of Debussy’s work

is decreased compared to the previous two works, instruments such as an emphasis on woodwind and the harp is another correlation of these timbres with magic and the fantastical – just as both Tchaikovsky and Holst had done before.

Tales of the fantastic are bound together with music throughout the western classical tradition. Whilst only four examples are listed here, the features found within them have gone on to be replicated again and again. It stands to reason therefore, that if music and literature have long since been intertwined, there will be a myriad of evidence of descriptions of music within their texts.

5.4.2 Fantasy Literature

'The most powerful fantastic music... is destined to remain virtual, existing only within the magic of our own imagination upon reading about it' (van Elferen, 2013). In the previous chapter, the role that manga has had upon JRPGs and their music was discussed. It makes sense therefore, to talk about fantasy literature in conjunction with WRPGs and their corresponding scores. ETA Hoffmann has already been mentioned as has Tolkien; however, it stands to reason that if music is mentioned with any more than a passing detail within the text then this will shape how composers write their scores. Below are several examples of instruments described within fantasy literature arranged in chronological order:

- **Brothers Grimm – *The Fisherman and his Wife* (1812)**

The troops were being marshalled before the door, and they were blowing trumpets and beating drums and cymbals... (Grimm & Grimm, 1993, p. 108).

- **Alfred Lord Tennyson – *Idylls of the King* (1859 – 1885)**

*They came from out a sacred mountain-cleft
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in hand,
And built it to the music of their harps.* (Tennyson, 2012, p. 22).

- **H.P. Lovecraft – *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* (1927)**

At intervals the clang of a strange bell shivered over the onyx city, answered each time by a peal of mystic music made up of horns, viols, and chanting voices. (Lovecraft, 2018, p. 68).

- **J.R.R. Tolkien – *The Hobbit* (1937)**

*"Now for some music!" said Thorin. "Bring out the instruments!"
Kili and Fili rushed for their bags and brought back little fiddles; Dori, Nori, and Ori brought out flutes from somewhere inside their coats; Bombur produced a drum from the hall; Bifur and Bofur went out too, and came back with clarinets that they had left among the walking-sticks Dwalin and Balin said: "Excuse me, I left mine in the porch!"*

"Just bring mine in with you," said Thorin.

They came back with viols as big as themselves, and with Thorin's harp wrapped in a green cloth. It was a beautiful golden harp, and when Thorin struck it the music began all at once, so sudden and sweet that Bilbo forgot everything else, and was swept away into dark lands under strange moons, far over The Water and very far from his hobbit-hole under The Hill. (Tolkien, 1981, p. 26).

- **C.S. Lewis – *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950)**

There were Tree-Women there and Well-Women (Dryads and Naiads as they used to be called in our world) who had stringed instruments; it was they who had made the music. (Lewis, 2016, p. 90).

- **Robert E. Howard – *Conan the Barbarian* (1954)**

This warrior came to the guardroom from the inner hall just in time to see it happen and to hear the last of a weird strain of music which froze his very soul. Tolkemec used to talk of these pipes, which the Xuchotlans swore were hidden somewhere in the catacombs with the bones of the ancient wizard who used them in his lifetime. (Howard, 2011, p. 694).

- **Terry Pratchett – *The Light Fantastic* (1986)**

"Yes, yes," said Bethan, sitting down glumly. "I know you don't. Rincewind, all the shops have been smashed open, there was a whole bunch of people across the street helping themselves to musical instruments, can you believe that?"

"Yeah," said Rincewind, picking up a knife and testing its blade thoughtfully. "Luters, I expect."¹³⁵ (Pratchett, 2012, p. 239).

- **J.K. Rowling – *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997)**

"Looks like a harp," said Ron. "Snape must have left it there."

"It must wake up the moment you stop playing," said Harry. "Well, here goes ..."

He put Hagrid's flute to his lips and blew. It wasn't really a tune, but from the first note the beast's eyes began to droop. Harry hardly drew breath. Slowly, the dog's growls ceased — it tottered on its paws and fell to its knees, then it slumped to the ground, fast asleep. (Rowling, 1997, p. 295).

In all of these examples, specific instruments across western classical and folk music are described within the text. It stands to reason therefore, that if the authors have been influenced by musical and styles to do with fantasy to an extent that they have specified them in their writings, composers of both film and games would also be. Obviously, this is not always the case and there are several adaptations of fantasy which have avoided this western classical tradition – Tangerine Dream's use of synthesisers in the US release of *Legend* (dir. Scott,

¹³⁵ The pun by Pratchett again illustrates an acceptance of medieval instruments within western fantasy.

1985) is a prime example. However, note the stereotypical uses of the instruments described; harps and voices are used for more ethereal uses, strings, woodwind and percussion for merriment whereas brass is described for more stately affairs much as it has been in section 5.4.1 within fantasy music of the western classical tradition.

Here we see additional links to the musical language that WRPGs have adopted. Below in table 5.2 is a short example of cues found within WRPGs of this:

Type	Game	Cue
Ethereal	<i>Baldur's Gate</i>	Helm's Temple
	<i>Icewind Dale</i>	Temple of Tempus
	<i>Dragon Age: Inquisition</i>	The Lost Temple
Merriment	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Around the Fire (<i>Heard in various taverns</i>)
	<i>Dragon Age II</i>	Tavern Music
	<i>Neverwinter Nights 2</i>	Sunken Flagon Theme (<i>Heard in the Sunken Flagon Tavern</i>)
Stately	<i>Baldur's Gate</i>	Safe in Beregost (<i>Heard in the town of Beregost</i>)
	<i>Neverwinter Nights</i>	Peninsula District
	<i>Pillars of Eternity 2: Deadfire</i>	Queen's Berth (<i>Heard in the port town Queen's Berth</i>)

Table 5.2 – Three uses of music within fantasy literature found in video games. Each example was chosen from a different WRPg. All text in italics is additional information provided by myself.

Further examples of these timbral and stylised uses are outlined below in section 5.6.2.

It was inevitable that as the era of cinema began, directors and screenwriters would turn to fantasy literature as a major source of inspiration. After all, it offers amongst many other reasons: escapism, drama, morals of good and evil and a way to explore personal and worldly issues in metaphor. For directors and producers, fantasy is often an eternal source ripe for re-telling at various intervals for new generations, sequels or prequels inspired by the original works and more. In the next section, the role of music in these cinematic fantasies is explored.

5.4.3 Hollywood Fantasy and its Music

John Williams once said, 'this area, the area of fantasy... is the best one that can exist for music' (Filmtracks, 2012). However, unlike other film genres, the fantasy genre did not evolve as quickly as others;

both musically and visually. Numerous reasons exist for this; amongst them the technical limitations of the portrayal of fantasy worlds not being able to be realised visually due to technological restrictions. However, with the arrival of technology such as CGI, the vision of directors and cinematographers could finally begin to be realised. Across this following section, a brief history of Hollywood fantasy cinema will be outlined showcasing timbral and stylistic choices used within them – similar to the history of music in anime found in section 4.4.2. By doing so, the cultural impact that these films – and their music – have had upon fantasy WRPG scores will become clearer. As has been the case across this thesis, narrative elements – where appropriate – will also be discussed in relation to how the composers have created their musical ideas. As Huron’s theory of expectation suggests, these sources of inspiration come about because their overall sound – stylistically and timbrally become associated and by correlation expected – within future films and games.

Perhaps the most important early fantasy film – notable for its soundtrack – was an animated film. Walt Disney Studios was (and still is) the most prominent western studio for producing animated films, of which many contained fantasy elements. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (dir. David Hand, 1937) was Disney’s take on the classic Brothers Grimm fairy tale. It was the first full length animated film to be produced by Walt Disney combining full colour animation with an established story and was the first film ever to have its soundtrack sold as an album separately (Hood, 2010). The film’s incidental music was composed by Paul J. Smith and Leigh Harline and featured a typical late-Romantic orchestral sound with a harp, glockenspiel/vibraphone and choir as notable timbral inclusions. The cue “Magic Mirror” is a good example of this. Meanwhile, the statelier overture features triumphant brass and lyrical strings contrasting one another in a style very accessible to consumers of fairy tale fantasy scores both then and now.

The remake of the silent classic *The Thief of Bagdad* (dir. Ludwig Berger and Michael Powell, 1940) was a hugely ambitious project and arguably one of the boldest ventures ever of British cinema. The score, composed by one of the last of the first-generation expatriate European composers – Miklós Rózsa led to him having a successful career at MGM due to his colourful orchestral techniques and imaginative melodies for exotic fantasies. The next year the film *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (dir. William Dieterle, 1941) was released – a spectacular adaptation of Stephen Vincent Benet’s “The Devil and Daniel Webster”. State-of-the-art special effects coupled with an exceedingly intricate score by film composer Bernard Herrmann – for which he received his only Academy Award for – led to great interest in this film and acclaim for Herrmann. His use of experimental recording techniques for the Satanic elements of the film created a distinctive sound in which the ‘singing of telegraph wires was combined with animated sound painted directly onto the celluloid soundtrack, and multi-track recording of a solo violinist created a devilish effect in a hoe-down scene’ (Cooke, 2008, p. 205).

The end of the Second World War saw a number of films produced that were intended to bolster morale. *Blithe Spirit* (dir. David Lean, 1945) was one of these. The film’s music, composed by Richard Addinsell complimented the film with an impressionistic score that managed to both be flamboyant and witty. Morale-

boosting films continued to be produced into 1946 with *A Matter of Life and Death* (dir. Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1946). The 'Stairway to Heaven' special effect was spectacular in its day and is now recognised as an iconic image. Combined with a score by Allan Gray which director Michael Powell liked so much he included it in his autobiography provided much needed relief for the recovering general population after the war. The films – *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* (dir. Nathan Juran, 1958) and *Jason and the Argonauts* (dir. Don Chaffey, 1963) – were again both scored for by Bernard Herrmann where he employed fragmented and brittle cues that provided the film with a quirky sense of humour. The track "Duel with the Skeletons" provides a great illustration of this for although the scene is one of danger where the protagonist – Sinbad, is facing off against a skeleton intent on killing him, the music accompanying the scene is one of quirky humour. The orchestration greatly adds to this as well – the xylophone, clappers and prominent tuba give an almost carnival atmosphere, not quite in keeping with the scene, but does provide a passing resemblance to Khachaturian's "Sabre Dance".

The late 1970s proved to be a defining decade in film making in general. With new cinema techniques available to directors, ideas that could not have been translated to screen before were now possible. Whilst still in their infancy, these techniques provided enough sense of realism for film studios to consider fantasy films a viable return on investment. Film scoring was also in the middle of a revolution with John Williams' score for *Star Wars* re-establishing traditional orchestral scoring as the definitive 'Hollywood sound' of the era. The impact of *Star Wars* on film music of the time cannot be understated; it 'not only imbued the films with a spirit of heroism in the face of threatened evil and humanized what had formerly been a genre marked by the calculated strangeness of electronics and atonality: they also tended towards the old manner of saturation scoring, a trend often noticeable in genres that require a high degree of suspension of disbelief (for example cartoons and fantasy) (Cooke, 2008, p. 462). Whilst *Star Wars* is a science-fiction film, the story at its core is much more representative of fantasy fiction with magic (the Force), sword fights (lightsabre duels) and knights rescuing princesses from an evil empire. With this in mind, it is natural that a Romantic-style orchestral score was re-established. This – according to Richard Davis – 'caused a shift in the way orchestras were perceived, in the acceptance by the audience of the music as a dramatic effect, and in the popularity of this music' (Davis, 1999, p. 60).

The first of several fantasy films all released in 1981 to utilise such film scoring was *Conan the Barbarian* (dir. John Milius, 1981). The score was composed by Basil Poledouris and whilst his score is predominantly classically scored, he does make use of a number of electronic instruments.¹³⁶ However, combining a symphony orchestra with a full choir leaves these electronic instruments merely in a supporting role. "The Riddle of Steel/Riders of Doom" is probably the film's most famous musical cue. An oboe passage symbolises a memory, whilst brass and the choir are heard whenever the advancing army is seen. Similarly, the oboe

¹³⁶ This predominantly orchestral sound with electronic components is almost exactly as Winifred Phillips describes the music of WRPGs as stated earlier.

and harp are heard for more peaceful moments – as alluded to above in table 5.2. The second fantasy film that requires mention was *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1981). Now an infamous franchise in its own right, spawning three sequels, the first introduced the cinema audience to a story combining action and adventure with fantasy. John Williams' score provides a number of extremely memorable themes, the most famous being the title theme known as the 'The Raiders March'. The fantasy elements of the film do not occur predominantly until towards the end of the film with the introduction of the Ark of the Covenant. The cue to this scene named "Miracle of the Ark" has an eerie harmonic beauty that nicely contrasts with the more homophonic and heroic 'Raiders March' theme. The dark ominous tones during this scene combined with glimpses of religious undertones give it a rather ominous feeling that is certainly not out of place within the scene. Additionally, the main female character – Marion Ravenwood – has a character theme which features lush strings, poignant flute and delicate harp creating a track that is in keeping with the western fantasy musical tradition established up to this point.

The film *Legend* (dir. Ridley Scott, 1985) is a curious case where the original score is deemed un-relatable to test audiences. Jerry Goldsmith was tasked with scoring the original but after the test screenings, Scott re-edited the film substantially and the German electronic band 'Tangerine Dream' was brought in to re-do the score. According to Eric Grudhauser, Goldsmith's score had 'a classically fantasy movie feel, but it was also interspersed with oddly modern flourishes. For example, a jaunty run of flutes, horns, chimes, and choral voices could be interrupted with a bolt of twangy synth sound' (Grundhauser, 2016). This combination of a predominantly orchestral score with electronic instruments is a feature similar to Poledouris' score to *Conan the Barbarian* and further supports Phillips' later statement of music within WRPGs. For the edited US-release of the film, the Tangerine Dream score is far more ethereal, using the electronic instruments to create a much more ambient feel which was less directly tied to the onscreen action; a feature arguably more akin to video games.

Hook (dir. Steven Spielberg, 1991) is a story that combines a different world, flying, fairies and other manners of supernatural activities making it a definitive fantasy story. John Williams – as the film's composer – stated in 1992 that, "I used music which could be also named 'theatrical' or 'ballet music.' When Peter Pan manages to fly, the orchestra plays music that reminds us of a very fast dance of a ballet. The same in the Ultimate War sequence. The music follows the rhythm of the picture, underlines the action. Somebody makes an intense move and the orchestra follows him with an emphasis, like the strings. Somebody else is dreaming and the orchestra describes the sense of this dream. In other words, my music for *Hook* doesn't abstain from that of a cartoon, where the music has to be attached in the picture" (Filmtracks, 2012). Comparisons with Tchaikovsky's ballet *The Nutcracker* are often heard – lyrical melodic phrases, larger than average use of the woodwind section and thematic ideas that often lend themselves to dancing of one form or another. Take for example the cue "The Ultimate War: Sword Fight" which is the final battle between Robin Williams' Peter Pan and Dustin Hoffman's Hook. Here, John Williams uses the entire orchestra with short motivic bursts

across the range of orchestral timbres, with syncopated brass hits interjecting the strings amplified by the percussion with the woodwind playing scurrying runs: all very much synonymous with the action scene that this cue underscores. Comparing this to the *Nutcracker*, we can use two of Tchaikovsky's character dances – the “March” and the “Russian Dance”. In the March, we have descending phrases in the woodwind followed by descending phrases in the strings often with repeated staccato semiquavers – something heard again and again throughout Williams' “Sword Fight”. Furthermore, we also hear strings principally take the melody with ascending woodwind runs at the end of phrases that lead into the main tune in the Russian Dance and again we are reminded of this in Williams' “Sword Fight”. Additionally, in the cue “The Arrival of Tink” we hear a fast-moving quaver pizzicato bass-line, similar to the ones heard again in *The Nutcracker*'s “March”. Time and again, across Williams' score for the film we notice similarities to that of Romantic music which influenced both the style and timbral choices of films of that time as stated above.

The beginning of the twenty-first century provided a wealth of fantasy films. The works of Howard Shore's score for *The Lord of the Rings* (dir. Peter Jackson, 2001 – 3) and subsequently *The Hobbit* (dir. Peter Jackson, 2012 – 14) have been well documented and need no repetition here, save for the orchestral timbre being the Hollywood musical style of the time. Another film franchise – and one whose latter films feed more specifically into the stylistic tendencies of WRPGs – is the *Harry Potter* franchise. Beginning with *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*¹³⁷ (dir. Chris Columbus, 2001) the *Harry Potter* film franchise has since spawned seven sequel films and two spin-offs (as of November 2020). The first three *Harry Potter* films were scored by John Williams with scores composed by Patrick Doyle for the fourth film, Nicholas Hooper for the fifth and sixth and Alexandre Desplat for the seventh and eighth. A lack of musical continuity is notable across the series with only Williams' “Hedwig's Theme” being used in each film.¹³⁸ The evolution in the film's musical style however, marked an evolution in the Hollywood sound. What started as thematic material in Williams' earlier iterations, gradually became motivic scoring with heavy use of often sampled percussion, whilst an orchestra accompanied over the top all while being heavily produced (Osicki, 2018). Osicki compares the latter film scores of the *Harry Potter* franchise to the scores of Hans Zimmer post his soundtrack to *Inception* (dir. Nolan, 2010). Zimmer has composed a number of scores for fantasy films, including the majority of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise, Frank Lehman observes:

Zimmer has already taken over large swathes of American film scoring practice... With RCP [Remote Control Pictures], Zimmer has been able to dictate the direction taken by a considerable amount of music for multimedia. The trends he has spearheaded range widely, from the accommodation of new scoring idioms and styles to innovations in the way music is edited and recorded. Zimmer is particularly influential by having championed the sweeping embrace of electronic technology in film

¹³⁷ *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in the US.

¹³⁸ Even this was omitted in the last film – perhaps due to the titular character of Hedwig the owl having died by this point.

music. Synthesizers in his scores routinely supplement—and in more than a few cases completely supplant—the symphonic orchestra as the primary performance force for contemporary movie scores (Lehman, 2016, p. 27).

This trend towards digital production and sampling had been a feature typical of video game score design almost since their inception. As Lehman describes, synthesizers and samples often now replace traditional orchestral scoring. Observe what Jeremy Soule states and how it compares to Zimmer's workings:

I almost prefer to work with synthesizers these days as they can create a unique sound that identifies me with my work. I also love to perform each instrument in the digital orchestra just so that everything is honed to my vision as to how the score should sound (Soule, 2007b).

Soule is not alone. Zur also uses sample libraries for much of his scoring with real instruments sometimes supplementing the digital tracks as do many other composers. Whilst this is typical of the audio industry within films and games at large, a pattern emerges of a generic timbre within a score built off Hollywood fantasy scores incorporated within a highly-polished digital production suite. Take for example the composer Harry Gregson-Williams. A composer of both films and games – most notably *Shrek* (dir. Andrew Adamson, 2001), *The Chronicles of Narnia* etc. and *Metal Gear Solid 2 – 4*, his work overlaps between these two mediums. In the 1990s, he worked under Hans Zimmer (Famous Composers, 2020) and was mentored in many of Zimmer's techniques, stating of Zimmer "the way that I'm making my demos absolutely – he taught me from beginning to end" (Spitfire Audio, 2016, 00:11:47) before referencing similar synthesisers, samples, and even the DAW that Zimmer makes use of.

After *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*, fantasy films were once again a defining genre in Hollywood – at least until the rise of the superhero film with the huge commercial success of *Iron Man* (dir. Favreau, 2008) and the rise of the Marvel and D.C. Comics Cinematic Universes. Fantasy films such as *Van Helsing* (dir. Stephen Sommers, 2004), *The Brothers Grimm* (dir. Terry Gilliam, 2004), *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (dir. Andrew Adamson, 2005) and its sequels, *Stardust* (dir. Matthew Vaughn, 2007), the animated film *How to Train Your Dragon* all continued the timbral forces set by *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* even if stylistically, the scores diverge somewhat. Nevertheless, with the milestone of John Williams' score for *Star Wars*, the late Romantic-style orchestra became the core instrumentation used in films including the fantasy genre.

WRPGs in particular offer a unique relationship with western fantasy cinema. As van Elferen's ALI model suggests, both musical affect and literacy are imperative in the immersion of players and I argue by extension the coherence of a score for the player. The above information links to these first two components of the ALI model: affect and literacy and I propose three sources when it comes to both WRPG and JRPGs:

1. The musical language, style and timbral choices from other forms of fantasy; particularly CRPGs closest sonic cousin (anime and Hollywood cinema for JRPGs/WRPGs respectively)
2. The playing of other fantasy video games and particularly CRPGs in that area
3. The playing of other CRPGs in that series

In the case of WRPGs, if the player of one of these titles has seen a fantasy film – either animated like *Snow White* or predominantly live action like *The Lord of the Rings*, then they will have assimilated a variety of musical vocabulary when viewing certain scenes – brass for nobility, choir for spiritual moments and so on. If the player has never played a WRPG before, then that shared vocabulary will give them enough understanding to provide coherence. If the player has played a fantasy video game – and particularly a CRPG – then the types of cues including stingers, environmental, combat and so forth will be familiar. If the player has played through other games in the series, for example a playthrough of *Skyrim* will have sonic links to *Morrowind* and *Oblivion*, then further understanding is gained. Van Elferen defines affect as the investment in a given situation through memory, emotion and identification and literacy as the fluency through frequent exposure to similar styles, then both are enhanced by my proposal.

What we are left with is an evolution of ideas, shared throughout multiple types of western media. From the musical language that helped shaped the scores to *The Nutcracker* and *The Planets*, to the scores of *Snow White* and *Indiana Jones*, the television shows of *Xena: The Warrior Princess* (ex. prod: Robert Tapert & Sam Raimi, 1995 - 2001) and *Game of Thrones* (ex. prod: David Benioff & D. B. Weiss et. al, 2011 – 2019) or the WRPGs of *Morrowind* and *Dragon Age*, the musical score has slowly evolved over time whilst keeping the generally accepted timbre. Where there has been a stylistic change, it has to be acknowledged that from the turn of the twenty-first century, melody – as alluded to above – has slowly been replaced by a motivic manipulation and slowly developing textures which have become the new norm. This almost suggests an interesting parallel to that of the continuo found in Baroque music where a bassline and harmonies were an important feature of the music. Perhaps therefore, this trend towards a motivic driven design for western fantasy music, is just a modern re-telling of what has come before, much like heroic epics would be re-told.

5.5 Western Fantasy: Variations on a Theme

A chosen one growing up not knowing their fate, a magical interruption, a quest to save the land from an unspeakable evil, companions that range from the quirky to the mysterious... this scenario has played out again and again. From *The Sword of Shannara*, to *Harry Potter*, *The Lord of the Rings* to *Magician, Pawn of Prophecy* to *Eragon*, *Northern Lights* to *The Wheel of Time*; all of these books – and often subsequent films – share this scenario and thus Campbell's "Hero's Journey" narrative structure. Similarly, almost all of them share a quasi-medieval world without the interruptions of modern technology. Why is this? At its heart I suggest that modern technology makes the journey either far easier, or completely impossible. Plot holes become inevitable if the characters had access to modern transport, instant communication, video and sound

recordings to use as evidence and so on. Instead, authors must remove the modern from the equation to help sustain this sense of realism. If this is the case, then it makes sense that for the vast bulk of the soundtrack, no ‘modern’ elements – particularly in timbre – but also in style should be incorporated. From a timbral perspective, this is easily appreciable as stated above. The ‘style’ is different; by this I mean a distinct absence of modern popular influences. Contrast this to the theme songs of many JRPGs in all their J-Pop brilliance or the quirky jazz-infused tracks such as the aforementioned “Chocobo Theme”; the scores of fantasy WRPGs abide by this homogeny of timbre and style.

5.6 Fade In/Out Soundscapes

The definition of a “Fade In/Out Soundscape” is music that is very ambient in nature, with textures that change slowly and often no discernible pulse. These tracks will often be repeated but will fade in and out, often either to allow for the game’s more background ambient sound effects to come to the fore (for example bird song, running water and leaves rustling etcetera) or because this cue morphs into another cue – something that Elizabeth Medina-Gray calls modularity and smoothness (2014, p. 105). An early rudimentary design of this – though not too far removed from the linear loop of JRPGs – was Origin System’s 1994 game for DOS *Ultima VIII: Pagan* (henceforth known as *Ultima VIII*). Scored by Nenad Vugrinec – a change from the previous game – the title has an orchestral ambient MIDI score where many of the tracks have a slow rate of harmonic change, blanket textures – consisting of strings, choir and synth bass – which would then play for its allotted time before a short fade-out, as heard in the area shown below in Fig. 5.2:



Fig. 5.2 – Screenshot of a forest in the first area of *Ultima VIII* where an example of Vugrinec’s ambient soundtrack is heard

Hints of melody creep in and out being barely more than motivic fragments; arguably a link to the lack of constant guidance within the game's overall narrative whereby the player is under less constraint as to where they need to go. The music as a whole is reasonably unremarkable, the ambience is there, but the silence at the end lasts mere seconds before the track starts again. This is similar to Blizzard's 1996 game *Diablo* which featured Matt Uelman's higher quality score in terms of its production values, but again, the loop of the track is such that it might as well be wall-to-wall music as heard in JRPGs.

Jeremy Soule's 2000 score for *Icwind Dale* is one of the most notable earlier examples of ambient scores not just repeating within seconds, but fading out and then back in again slowly; to an extent that often it is not perceptible at first. This feature would be repeated in Inon Zur's soundtrack to the sequel *Icwind Dale II*.¹³⁹ Soule's next D&D-based game *Neverwinter Nights* also used this technique and the beginning of the game is a prime example. The player-controlled character is in the town's barracks at the start of their journey in the game and is wandering through to the training hall. Within the score there is much of the same slow-rate of harmonic change, with strings, horns, woodwind and harp gently playing distinctly unremarkable musical textures that fit the calm (if stately) medieval fantasy area. Titled "City of Neverwinter" on the OST, the cue heard in game (see Fig. 5.4) is combined with the ambient noises of the area such as braziers burning, swords clashing and echoing footsteps etcetera as would be expected (see Fig. 5.3 and [audio track 5.01](#)).

¹³⁹ Though I would argue that both suffer from unnecessary rising brass swells that divert from the player's attention.

♩=90 poco rit. . . a tempo (♩=90)

Flute

Horn in F

Bass Drum

Harp

Strings

8^{vb}

7

Fl.

Hn.

B. D.

Hp.

Str.

(8).....

Fig. 5.3 – Transcription of bars 1 – 13 of “City of Neverwinter” from *Neverwinter Nights* by Jeremy Soule

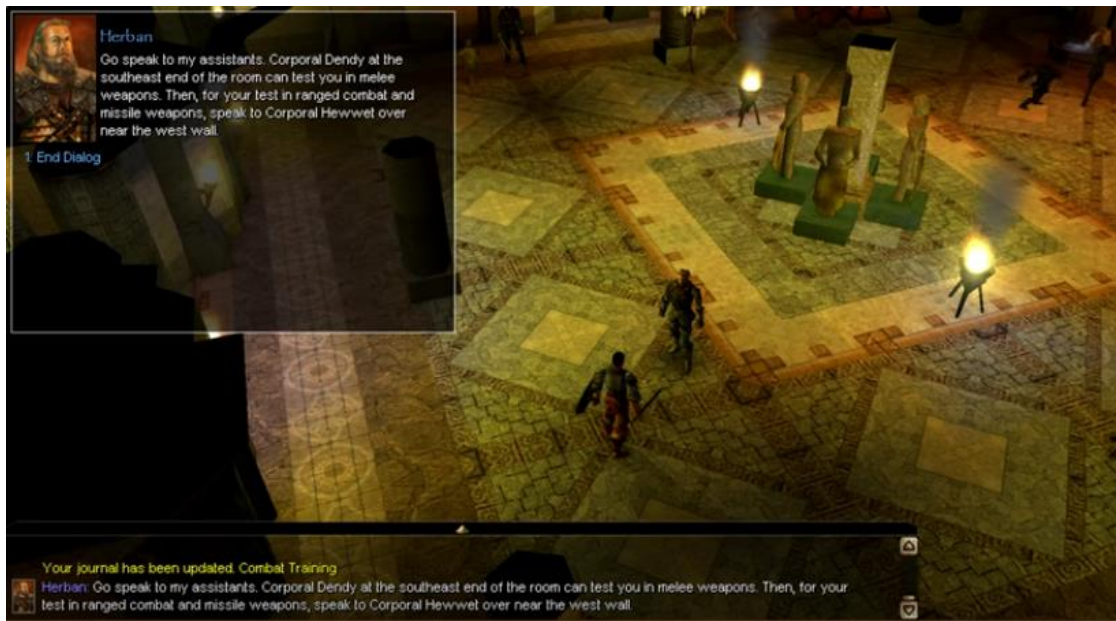


Fig. 5.4 – Screenshot of the barracks – the first area of *Neverwinter Nights* – where the above cue “City of Neverwinter” is heard.

Notice the similarities to “Stealth in the Bandit Camp” by Michael Hoenig shown in Fig. 2.34 – another environmental cue from a Dungeons & Dragons WRPG. Strings swells, horns and a bass drum are found in both along with a flute, with numerous time-signature changes to disguise the metre. Notice too, the clear four quaver ostinato in the harp during the first four bars which are heard against the dotted crotchet minims in the strings – this again blurs the overall metre and creates a somewhat ambient texture.

Soule continued in this vein with *Morrowind*, and *Oblivion*, creating far fewer tracks than his JRPG counterparts, emphasising ambience over thematic material in an attempt avoid repetition fatigue.¹⁴⁰ Soule states:

I really have to consider texture very closely when I create music that is going to be heard in a repetitive fashion. Games like *Oblivion* had players that spent more than 100 hours with the experience. I was very conscious of how the music sits in a space over time as I orchestrated each melody. I tend to go with more ambient textures if I have to cover a large area with not a lot of music allocation in the design (Soule, 2007b).

Fantasy WRPGs continue to be scored in this manner. The 2014 BioWare game *Dragon Age: Inquisition* and the Obsidian Entertainment 2018 game *Pillars of Eternity II: Deadfire* are both more modern critically-acclaimed examples of this way of scoring with both again featuring an orchestral palette. William Gibbons agrees with this analysis:

¹⁴⁰ This approach was especially criticised for *Morrowind* however, with both Gamespot and Gamespy reviews notably pointing out a lack of musical material (Kasavin 2002, Abner 2002).

The tendency [in WRPGs] has been to largely phase out the use of loops and wall-to-wall music placement in favor of short, atmospheric cues and increased amounts of silence during gameplay, complemented with cinematically scored cut scenes (favoring the stylistic tropes of fantasy-adventure films). The shorter cues most often avoid prominent melodic material and are often composed first and foremost with the goal of avoiding listener fatigue (Gibbons, 2017, p. 420).

Arguably one of the more distinguishing features between JRPGs and WRPGs is the continuous sequel. Whereas JRPGs have long-running series such as *Dragon Quest*, *Final Fantasy*, *Fire Emblem*, *Persona* etc., the modern WRPG (as of November 2020) has far fewer. Whilst *The Elder Scrolls* franchise is on game number five of the main series (at the time of writing), there is an argument to be made that the series had something of a reinvention between *Daggerfall* and *Morrowind*. *Neverwinter Nights* has had only one direct sequel and an MMO spin-off. *Baldur's Gate* only saw one sequel, though a third is currently (again at the time of writing) in early access. *Dragon Age* has only had three games, though once again, another is in development. Because of this, a sense of nostalgia has not necessarily been built up in quite the same way as for their Japanese counterparts – many of which have been running since the 1980s. I argue therefore, that if Ivănescu suggests that nostalgia is created through appropriation and pastiche, then for modern fantasy WRPGs, nostalgia is presently created only through an appropriation of style and timbral of other media and other games in this ludic genre dating back to *Diablo* and *Baldur's Gate*. JRPGs on the other hand also make use of the above appropriation but also have the history (*Dragon Quest*, *Final Fantasy* and *The Tales* series) to allow for cues to appropriate earlier cues in the *series*. For these JRPGs, an entire generation has seen an evolution in these games, yet for Western audiences, these best-selling WRPGs are much younger. As such, the melodies heard in these games have not had the iterations and sequels to be built upon, developed and re-arranged that JRPG scores have. Note too, that often the sequel of a game will be different to the initial game, for instance *Dragon Age: Inquisition* was composed by Trevor Morris, whereas its two predecessors were by Inon Zur. This is again in contrast with JRPGs such as *Dragon Quest* who has had Koichi Sugiyama consistently scoring for them, Nobuo Uematsu scoring ten main games and helping with others, Yoko Shimomura for all of the *Kingdom Hearts* etcetera. A sense of ownership has been built up by these composers and for the fans; they have come to expect that particular sound. Perhaps, the nature of the ambient score reduces the ownership of it; by its nature, ambience is designed not to be noticed and so composers can be brought in and out of projects as long as their scores' meet this ambience and comply to the timbral choices of earlier titles.

5.7 Thematic 'Templates' in WRPGs

As suggested in section 3.3, from the inception of *Dragon Quest*, single player fantasy CRPGs in general have had a certain number of common cues within their overall musical score. These thematic templates can again be drawn upon to categorise music found within WRPGs as was done for JRPGs in section 4.6. As previously stated however, with character themes usually missing from WRPGs, there are immediate

differences to be found as compared to JRPGs. The irony of this, is that Sugiyama's eight theme template of the JRPG *Dragon Quest* continues to fit much more closely to contemporary WRPGs than they do to JRPGs. To cover the stereotypes of WRPG track design, table 5.4 below outlines these thematic templates:

Track Archetype	Template	Explanation
Special	Opening/Main Theme	Narratively driven. Sets scene at beginning of game and likely to accompany opening cutscene. <i>Generally, heavily orchestral though occasionally poignant with restrictive orchestration.</i>
	Ending	Finishes story. Usually, a revision of the main theme – will often be treated like end-credits of a film being a medley of past themes.
	Victory Stinger	Triumphant music used to signal a successful outcome to the action themes. Ends combat theme. Much shorter than for JRPGs. <i>Short affirmative statement – usually brass. In same key as combat theme.</i>
	Death/Game Over Stinger	Sombre music used to signal a failed outcome to the action themes. Much shorter than for JRPGs. <i>Either sound effect or acoustic instruments, often woodwind/strings. Minor tonality or atonal. Slow tempo.</i>
Area	Calm	Accompanying cue to any area of the game that is non-threatening to the player <u>except</u> for “spiritual” locations (shown below). Narratively driven based on Chatman's “Setting”. <i>Usually ambient in style though can have some melodic elements, major tonality. Predominantly string and woodwind timbres, though horns can be used if played legato to create a sense of grandeur. Moderate or slow tempo. Mezzo forte dynamic or lower.</i>
	Tense	Accompanying cue to any area of the game that poses a potential threat to the player yet is <u>not</u> an action track. Narratively driven based on Chatman's “Setting”. <i>Unsettling style, minor tonality often with ambiguous harmonies and chromaticism. Ambient in nature. Piano dynamic with occasional swells. Tremolo string timbres, percussion rolls (though always avoiding any clear sense of pulse). Horn and trombone swells. Harmonic devices such as pedals and inverted pedals. Sound effects such as bowed cymbals.</i>
	Spiritual	Accompanying cue for any religious/spiritual area to the game. <i>Choir and/or harp/organ. Minimal percussion though tubular bell sometimes heard. Usually a lot of reverb.</i> <i>If narratively ‘holy’: major or modal tonalities.</i> <i>If narratively ‘corrupt’ or ‘cursed’: minor tonalities.</i>
	Tavern	Accompanying cue for any tavern/pub/inn within the game. <i>Either diegetic or non-diegetic depending on any visible performers. Usually will feature a lute/other stringed instrument and perhaps a hand drum. Occasional singing or woodwind instruments heard. Generally, stylistically based on European folk-songs. Melody-dominated homophony.</i>

	Stately	Accompanying cue to a noble house, castle, palace, academic institution etcetera. <i>Horns or trumpets take lead with prominent snare. Where melodic material is heard, it is usually triadic.</i>
Action	Combat – Normal	Accompanying cue to a standard battle theme. <i>Energetic, brass, string and percussion heavy. Forte/fortissimo dynamic, fast tempo. Prominent ostinato figures.</i>
	Combat – Boss	Accompanying cue to the final boss of the game. <i>A distinct increase in musical tension and intensity over Combat – Normal.</i>

Table 5.4 – Proposed List of ‘Templates’ found in WRPGs and how they fit into the proposed archetypes.
Shading is used purely for visual purposes to differentiate the different cue archetypes.

As suggested, there is a notable decrease in the number of cues found in my template as compared to JRPGs, with composers likely to create multiple versions of these to reduce repetition fatigue.¹⁴¹ That being said there should also be mentioned that for the vast majority of these scores, their soundtracks have far fewer tracks on their released OSTs.¹⁴² As alluded to in Chapter Two, WRPGs are far more likely to be action-RPGs rather than turn-based which explains the absence of the ‘Entering Combat’ stinger.

As before, there is some overlap between Sugiyama’s original eight tracks and the eleven proposed templates above. Therefore, to help quantify this newly proposed set of archetypes, we can populate the table with games and examples of tracks within their scores that match these. As with table 4.5, roughly two games per year have been selected from 1997 - 2020. To again help with readability, the cue archetypes have been split so that there are two per page and several headings have been shortened. As before, cue names have been taken from OST track titles and where this is unknown a ✓ or *[comment]* has been added:

¹⁴¹ Arguably the most notable difference between most JRPG and WRPG cues excluding style and timbre is the use of melody as stated in section 5.4. A notable melody played multiple times will undoubtedly become memorable and thus lead to repetition fatigue far faster than other musical elements. This perhaps suggest why JRPGs require most cues so as to diminish the number of times each melodic cue would be heard.

¹⁴² *Dragon Age II* is one a few games where the total number of cues found in the game far exceeds the total number of tracks listed in its OST. In this particular case, it was possible to reference unpublished (but still named) tracks that appeared in the game.

Year	Game	Special			
		Opening/Main Theme	Ending	Victory Stinger	Defeat Stinger
1997	<i>Betrayal in Antara</i>	Main Menu	✓		✓
1997	<i>Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny</i>	Ancient Magic	Finale		✓
1998	<i>Baldur's Gate</i>	Main Theme	End of the Quest		✓
1998	<i>Might and Magic VI: The Mandate of Heaven</i>	Moonlit Journey/Main Titles	Credits	✓	✓
1999	<i>Planescape: Torment</i>	Main Title	Good Ending	✓	✓
1999	<i>Lands of Lore III</i>	Prelude	✓		✓
2000	<i>Icewind Dale</i>	Icewind Dale Theme	Success! (Movie 5)		✓
2000	<i>Diablo 2</i>	Wilderness	Coda		✓
2001	<i>Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance</i>	The Dark Alliance	A Tale for Another Time		✓
2001	<i>Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Drannor</i>	The Pool Awakens	The Wail of Undeath / Epilogue		✓
2002	<i>Neverwinter Nights</i>	Main Theme	Ending Movie		✓
2002	<i>Icewind Dale 2</i>	Main Theme			✓
2002	<i>The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind</i>	Nerevar Rising	Nerevar Rising (Reprise)		✓
2003	<i>The Temple of Elemental Evil</i>	Intro	Credits		✓
2004	<i>Sacred</i>	Ancaria's Soul	The End		✓
2004	<i>Fable</i>	Fable Theme			✓
2005	<i>Dungeon Siege 2</i>	Prologue	Epilogue		✓
2005	<i>Champions: Return to Arms</i>	Main Menu	✓		✓
2006	<i>The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion</i>	Reign of the Septims	✓		✓
2006	<i>Dark Messiah of Might & Magic</i>	Main Menu	Awakening	✓	✓
2006	<i>Neverwinter Nights 2</i>	Neverwinter City Theme	✓	Stinger, Combat Win	Stinger, Combat Lose
2007	<i>Eschalon Book 1</i>	Main Theme	✓		✓
2007	<i>Two Worlds</i>	Main Theme	Love Conquers		✓
2008	<i>Fable II</i>	Fable II Theme	✓	[Sound effect when receiving battle rewards]	✓
2009	<i>Venetica</i>	Introduction	Epilogue		✓
2009	<i>Dragon Age: Origins</i>	Dragon Age Origins	The Coronation	[Sound effect]	✓
2010	<i>Arcania: Gothic 4</i>	Main Theme	Credits		✓
2010	<i>Fable III</i>	Fable III Theme	Finale		✓
2011	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Dragonborn	Legendary Song (Sovngarde)		✓
2011	<i>Dragon Age II</i>	Dragon Age 2 Main Theme	Ending (Mages)		✓
2012	<i>Diablo III</i>	And the Heavens Shall Tremble	A New Dawn		✓
2012	<i>Darksiders II</i>	Death vs War	✓		✓
2013	<i>The Incredible Adventures of Van Helsing</i>	Incredible Adventures Ahead (Main Theme)	✓		✓
2013	<i>The Banner Saga</i>	We Will Not be Forgotten	Onward		✓
2014	<i>Dragon Age: Inquisition</i>	Dragon Age Inquisition Theme	Epilogue		✓
2015	<i>Magicka 2</i>	Welcome Back to Midgard	The Hidden Ending		✓
2015	<i>Pillars of Eternity</i>	Title Theme	Credits		✓
2016	<i>The Banner Saga 2</i>	An Oath, Until the End	Our Steps, to the Night	✓	✓
2016	<i>Darkest Dungeon</i>	Darkest Dungeon Theme	The End	[Sound effect]	✓
2018	<i>Pillars of Eternity II: Deadfire</i>	Deadfire	✓		✓
2018	<i>Pathfinder: Kingmaker</i>	Main Theme	✓		✓
2019	<i>Operencia: The Stolen Sun</i>	✓	✓	[Sound effect]	✓
2019	<i>Greedfall</i>	The Fallen Hope	Celebration		✓

Year	Game	Area					Action	
		Calm	Tense	Spiritual	Tavern	Stately	Normal	Final Boss
1997	<i>Betrayal in Antara</i>	Marlon's Mercantiles	Bead Puzzle Chest	Temple of Senaedin	Tavern	Blacksmith	Battle #1	Battle #5
1997	<i>Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny</i>	Gladstone	Claw Mountains	The Temple		Emperor's Theme	The Battle of Gladstone	Ru-Loi Battle
1998	<i>Baldur's Gate</i>	Candlekeep	Cloakwood Forest	Helm's Temple	The Friendly Arms Inn	Safe in Beregost	Attacked by Assassins	The Last Battle
1998	<i>Might and Magic VI: The Mandate of Heaven</i>	Frozen Highlands	Dungeon Theme #1	Exploring the Temple of Baa		Castle Ironfist		Arena
1999	<i>Planescape: Torment</i>		Mortuary		Smoldering Corpse Bar	Civic Festhall	Catacombs Battle	Fortress Battle
1999	<i>Lands of Lore III</i>	Lower Gladstone	Woods	Clerics Guild		Gladstone Keep	Woods Fight	Final Battle
2000	<i>Icewind Dale</i>	Hrothgar's Home	Aquarium of Alkonos	Temple of Tempus		Easthaven in Peace	Drums of the Dead	Belhifet's Doom
2000	<i>Diablo 2</i>	Toru	Cave	Monastery				Diablo
2001	<i>Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance</i>	Dwarven Mining Camp	Critters in the Cellar	Shadow Over Baldur's Gate	Ghost of the Tavern	Granethor Keep	The Orb of the Undead	Eldrith's Final Battle
2001	<i>Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Drannor</i>	Nottle	Trapped	Faerun	The Song of Faerun	Heroes	Fight	Battle to the Death
2002	<i>Neverwinter Nights</i>	City of Neverwinter	No Man's Land	Temple of Tyr	Seedy Tavern	Castle Never	Street Encounter	Source Stone Battle
2002	<i>Icewind Dale 2</i>	Skeleton of a Town	The Fellwood	The Temple of Auril			The Goblin Hordes	Roar of the White Dragon
2002	<i>The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind</i>	Peaceful Waters	Drumbeat of the Dunmer	Blessing of Vivec		Shed Your Travails	Bright Spears, Dark Blood	Stormclouds on the Battlefield
2003	<i>The Temple of Elemental Evil</i>	Hommlet	Temple Entrance	Hommlet Temple			Combat	Moathouse Combat
2004	<i>Sacred</i>	Welcome Home	Depths of a Dungeon		Pub	Maintown	Fight of the NukNuks	Dragon's Flight
2004	<i>Fable</i>	Oakvale	Darkwood	Temple of Light				
2005	<i>Dungeon Siege 2</i>	Eirulan	An Unsettling Situation	Enchanted Grove		Outside of the Castle	Into the Jungle	Final Confrontation
2005	<i>Champions: Return to Arms</i>	Plane of Tranquility	Extra Kelethin		Drunder		Drunder Arena	Yeti Battle
2006	<i>The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion</i>	Through the Valleys	Tension	Alls Well	Minstrel's Lament	Glory of Cyrodiil	Fall of the Hammer	Daedra in Flight
2006	<i>Dark Messiah of Might & Magic</i>	The Gates of Stonehelm	Redskull Island	Leanna's Theme			Crawling from the Deep	Avatar of the Goddess
2006	<i>Neverwinter Nights 2</i>	West Harbor	Swamp Theme	Ilfarn Ruins	Sunken Flagon Theme	Crossroad Keep	Combat Theme	King of Shadows Theme
2007	<i>Eschalon Book 1</i>	Overland	Abyss	Air Prelude	Forge Thy Destiny	The Commonwealth	Battle	
2007	<i>Two Worlds</i>	Bot Moss Forest	Purgatory	Cathalon	Tharbakin		Desert Attack	
2008	<i>Fable II</i>	Oakfield	Howling Halls	Marcus Memorial	Bowerstone Cemetery	Fairfax Castle		
2009	<i>Venetica</i>	Mountain Village	Roaming at Night		Send my Ships	Palace Exploration	Skirmish	Final Battle
2009	<i>Dragon Age: Origins</i>	The Party Camp	Haven	Urn of Sacred Ashes	Tavern	King Edrin	The Deep Roads	Challenge an Arch Demon

2010	<i>Arcania: Gothic 4</i>	Village	Dungeon 1	Temple 1	Tavern	Xardas Tower	Combat 1	Combat 2
2010	<i>Fable III</i>	A Hero Awakens	Shadelight	Sanctuary	Reaver Mansion	Coronation	Fight or Flight	
2011	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Awake	Night Without Stars	Ancient Stones	The Bannered Mare	The City Gates	Steel on Steel	One They Fear
2011	<i>Dragon Age II</i>	Kirkwall Town Act 2 (Exploration)	Enter Deep Roads		Tavern Music	Viscount	Blightlands	Bone Pit Battle
2012	<i>Diablo III</i>	New Tristram	Tamoe Highlands	Incantation				Diablo
2012	<i>Darksiders II</i>	The Makers Theme	City of the Dead	Crystal Spire			The Makers Fightback	Lord of the Black Stone
2013	<i>The Incredible Adventures of Van Helsing</i>	Calm Evening	Savage Landscape		Feast of Gypsies		Fierce Battle	Fulmigati Himself
2013	<i>The Banner Saga</i>	How Did it Come to This?	Thunder Before Lightning	Weary the Weight of the Sun		Little Did They Sleep	Cut with a Keen-Edged Sword	Our Heels Bleed from the Bites of Wolves
2014	<i>Dragon Age: Inquisition</i>	The Western Approach	In Hushed Whispers	The Lost Temple	Tavern Song	Val Royeaux	Lord Seeker	Doom Upon all the World
2015	<i>Magicka 2</i>	Learn to Spell Again	Searching for Nostrir the Soothsayer	The Alliance	... Except Now We Have a Bar!	Mountaineering in Higher Higerlands	Goblins Everywhere!	This is My Final Form!
2015	<i>Pillars of Eternity</i>	Wilderness – Encampment	Od-Nua-a	Temple of Wedica	Inn A	Town-ondras-girt	Combat A	Combat E
2016	<i>The Banner Saga 2</i>	Promises of Sanctuary	Even the Trees can Smell Your Blood				Blades Yearn for Courageous Blood	Threads Unweave
2016	<i>Darkest Dungeon</i>	The Hamlet	Explore the Ruins				Combat in the Ruins	The Final Combat
2018	<i>Pillars of Eternity II: Deadfire</i>	Queen’s Berth	What the Goddess Has Touched	The Fate of Caed Nua	Farmer and the Fox	Setting Sail	Close to Board	Rise Again, Rise Again
2018	<i>Pathfinder: Kingmaker</i>	Exploring the Stolen Lands	Old Sycamore Caves	Where Trees Talk to the Stars	Brevoy Folk Melody	Rule of Order	Dungeon Battle Theme 1	A String that Holds the World in Place
2019	<i>Operencia: The Stolen Sun</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
2019	<i>Greedfall</i>	Mystical Landscapes	✓			✓	Bandits	Transnature

Table 5.5 - Table of cues found in WRPGs to match the proposed 11 ‘templates’.

The table has been split into two to allow the information to be displayed on consecutive pages.

With 43 games listed, against the proposed eleven templates, this offers 473 possible cells to be populated. As with table 4.6, not every example game listed matches the model as a whole and a brief breakdown of the table within *Microsoft Excel* reveals that 386 cells are filled creating an accuracy rate of 81.61% - almost identical to the accuracy rate to the proposed template model for JRPGs.

As before, it is useful to present a discussion on the findings. Unlike for JRPGs, a clear distinction between an opening theme and the game’s main theme was not found due to them generally being used interchangeably. Similarly, not every game has a distinct ending theme; hence the cells that have been left

blank. In these cases, it is generally the case that they will repeat the main theme; however, there are some games – like *Morrowind*, *Skyrim* or *The Incredible Adventures of Van Helsing* – where once the final boss has been defeated and an ‘ending’ dialogue box or text-heavy ending description has been shown, the game allows the player to continue from that point to resume exploring the game world or completing side-quests.

Whilst a defeat stinger was found in every game, these would more often than not be short sound effects; in sharp contrast to the more melodic cues found in JRPGs where ‘stingers’ are perhaps not always the correct term. Nevertheless, in both styles of CRPG discussed across this thesis, we see a direct musical reference to Bernard Suits’ definition of a game – overcoming obstacles. There must be a way to fail against these obstacles and as such, music and sound is used to reinforce sonically a player’s failure. Conversely, victory stingers were much less common to a degree that it was debatable whether they should be included as a template. As described above, WRPGs tend to be Action-RPGs or ‘realtime with pause’ (see section 2.5). As such, whilst in JRPGs it makes sense where players are transported from one exploratory screen to a unique battle screen to end a successful battle with a fanfare, this would be perhaps unnecessary to include in an Action-RPG. Instead, we find a return from the high tension of combat to a lower tension of the exploratory setting theme generally through a simple cross-fade.

The settings themselves – labelled within the templates as ‘Area’ themes – are almost universally represented, particularly with ‘calm’ areas and ‘tense’ areas, much as they were with JRPGs. Again, this links to a CRPGs narrative and ludic features. ‘Calm’ areas often relate to a period of very low tension where narrative elements such as plot can be brought to the player’s attention. Conversely, ‘tense’ areas are where more ludic elements can occur – namely combat. This balance is applicable to both forms of CRPG making it a staple across the CRPG divide.

The ‘Exploratory – Tavern’ suggested template has the lowest percentage filled of any column at 58%. Nevertheless, it is clearly a staple of the majority of WRPGs. This is not surprising; taverns are synonymous with the working class of the Middle Ages and with WRPGs drawing so much of their inspiration from the period, taverns were bound to be a part of the game. Whilst there are plenty of examples of JRPGs containing inns or taverns, for example in *Final Fantasy* or *Golden Sun*, the move away from purely European medieval-inspired fantasy worlds has left taverns in video games synonymous with WRPGs. Their roles in these games are numerous; not only to be part of the social and cultural fabric of the town or village that the player is in, but also that – like with ‘The Prancing Pony’ where Frodo and his companions stayed in *The Lord of the Rings* – it is a safe-harbour from the story’s main plot. Rest can be had (either removing fatigue or healing the player/party), items can be bought (food and drink), companions can be gained (for example in *Baldur’s Gate*) and quests can be picked up. In several games, the music heard in the tavern is diegetic – rather than the non-diegetic score of the majority of the rest of the game – with non-playable character (NPC) bards or minstrels being seen playing on various period-appropriate instruments or singing in the corner of the room. There are games however, that do have taverns, but no musical accompaniment for example the *Icwind*

Dale games which rely on ambient noise (people speaking, glasses clinking etcetera) rather than music. This merits an interesting discussion of areas within games where the developers have deemed that music be absent; perhaps as a respite from the otherwise constant musical soundscape of the rest of the game.

As stated in table 5.3, where music is heard, it is often a pastiche of European folk music, either imagined – if heard non-diegetically – or visually played by a bard-like character. Bards in medieval times were storytellers and among many of their duties, would often use music to tell these stories of fables or news. As such, it was typical to have melody-dominated homophonic textures: a simple accompaniment upon which a bard would sing or play a melody. Depending on the subject matter, the song may be slow or fast, in a major or minor tonality, but the accompaniment would be one of a travelling musician – hand held string instruments, woodwind and minimal percussion. This is the style of music we hear within a tavern song.

Meanwhile, music accompanying “Exploratory - Spiritual Areas” is found in 76.74% of the games listed; not as high as with JRPGs, but significant nonetheless. If we accept that the narrative of fantasy is synonymous with mid-to-late medieval Europe, we can look at religion during this period. This period of history within Europe was dominated by Christianity¹⁴³ having formed out of the collapse of the Roman Empire (Rüpke, 2014, p. 2). Within Christianity, singing was encouraged within the church as referenced in the bible: ‘I will pray with the spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind’ (1 Cor 14:15, NIV). As time passed, the organ also became synonymous with church music. This use of voices and church in the cues heard in any spiritual locale within WRPGs is therefore unsurprising even if the religion found in the game is not Christianity. Temples – a link perhaps to Judaism or the Old Testament – and churches/cathedrals are perhaps the most common form of this spiritual area found in WRPGs, but so too are forest groves; a link back to paganism which was also still prevalent within medieval Europe and with it, inclusions of instruments such as the harp and/or flute can also still be heard.

Whilst not attempting to go into any particular depth with regards to religion and CRPGs, Ong’s statement (see 4.6.2) of the opaqueness of religious symbology in JRPGs is not the case here. Christianity’s prevalence within medieval Europe – of which WRPGs stylistically are most likely to fall into – allows for players of this ludic genre to understand the historical and cultural symbolism of these timbres.

5.8 Conclusion

Western fantasy computer role-playing games are unarguably a result of evolution within multiple aspects of western cultures. From medieval history, religion and myth, to contemporary stories and Hollywood cinema, their cultural origins have been constructed over hundreds of years. For the WRPG, it is now accepted to have evolved from the TRPG *Dungeons & Dragons* whilst their music is undeniably influenced

¹⁴³ Although the fantasy elements of the narrative give suggestions of paganism.

both by the western classical tradition, western fantasy literature and Hollywood fantasy films scores using the timbral forces of a late-Romantic style orchestral combined with choir. To think that this tone-palette has remained this way for over a hundred years is quite remarkable yet – with the inclusion of some rock influences – the fantasy WRPg sound shows no sign of abating. As shown in section 5.6 within the proposed ‘templates’ found in WRPgs, there are fewer unique track styles to be found than their brethren of the JRPG. Nevertheless, a drive to avoid repetition fatigue has seen multiple versions of these templates recorded; a definite evolution after the incredibly short scores of the 1990s and early 2000s. Ambience is generally the order of business with WRPgs; a feature brokered in the mid-1990s with games like *Ultima VIII* and *Diablo* with a deliberate avoidance again of repetition fatigue. Despite Uelman’s inclusion of timbral forces such as the electric guitar, the vast majority of composers for the WRPg use the same instrumentation as Hoenig in 1998 for *Baldur’s Gate* and whilst sample libraries and production techniques have evolved, the dominant timbres are still the same now as they were over two decades ago.

Chatman’s components of a narrative theory can again be considered. Chatman argues that a story must contain actions, happenings, settings and characters in order to create a narrative. JRPGs do indeed often cover the four of these components from a musical perspective but WRPgs generally only cover three and exclude character themes from the mix. Whilst the use of ‘special’, ‘area’ and ‘action’ tracks easily encompass all of the cues required for a game from a ludic perspective, without these character themes, WRPgs will arguably never fully encompass them narratively.

We can now return to the core question of the thesis – that of a coherent score. Just as JRPGs embraced illogicality within their narrative and visual style – building upon what anime had already done, WRPgs have consistently maintained logic within their narrative and what is displayed on screen. This in turn, builds upon how fantasy is showcased in the West throughout stage, screen and literature. As such, I argue that in order for a WRPg score to be considered coherent, consistency must be maintained – as found in its narrative and visuals – and as such, an ambient style and a neo-Romantic orchestral style is required.

In the penultimate chapter to this thesis, I consider the music of CRPGs outside of their original setting – namely in video game music concerts. This was felt necessary as a further attempt to showcase the differences in cues between JRPGs and WRPgs by considering elements to their design that appeal to listeners and players of these games. By doing so, we can identify one particular musical element that clearly separates cues across the JRPG/WRPg divide and in doing so, provide additional support to my argument of coherence.

CHAPTER 6:

THE ALLURE OF THE JRPG SOUNDTRACK IN VIDEO GAME MUSIC CONCERTS

6.1 Background

As Gibbons and Reale state in their introduction to *Music in the Role-Playing Game: Heroes and Harmonies*, [C]RPGs have been celebrated for the quality of their musical scores, many of which have also experienced second lives as concert music in recent years' (Gibbons & Reale, 2019, p. 1). However, whilst this is true – and quantifiable evidence to support that claim is provided below – it does not tell the whole story. Instead, it is the JRPG that truly dominates the set lists of video game music concerts. As such, this chapter provides context as to how video game music concerts came into being. Whilst brief overviews have been written that outline the more publicly well-known concerts – for example 'The Story of Video Game Music Concerts' on Classicfm.com or Melanie Fritch's 2013 chapter "The History of Video Game Music"), few other attempts have been made to collate this information or expand upon it. By doing so, it offers an additional viewpoint on what makes JRPG scores coherent and why the cues found in JRPGs above all other video game capture the imaginations of players and are now synonymous with most video game music concerts

The first video game music concert was performed on 20th August 1987 at the Suntory Hall in Tokyo and was hosted by the Japanese composer and conductor Koichi Sugiyama (Sugimania, N.D.). Finding fame within videogames in his music for the *Dragon Quest* series of Japanese Role-Playing Games, he had created specific orchestrations out of his pieces for *Dragon Quest* and *Dragon Quest II* to be played at his 'Dragon Quest in Concert – Family Classic Concert' (Greening, 2007). Performing under him was the Tokyo String Ensemble with the first half of the concert being dedicated to the *Carnival of the Animals* suite by the Camille Saint-Saëns and the second half being dedicated to his own music of *Dragon Quest*. The concert was a resounding success and Sugiyama has gone on to conduct a further thirty-one of them in Japan with the last one (as of June 2019) being performed on August, 8 2018 although there is another scheduled for August 7, 2019 as well (Sugimania, N.D.). It is worthy of note to reinforce the point that this first concert was split into two parts; the first a more traditional western composer and only afterwards was the music of *Dragon Quest* performed. It suggests that even with Sugiyama's reputation as a classically trained musician and established conductor that the music to a video game was seen as a gamble. Fig. 6.1 shows a scan of the advertising poster for this first video game music concert.



Fig. 6.1 – The Poster for the first “Family Classic Concert” in which the music to *Dragon Quest* was performed.

The ‘Family Classic Concert’ series was a success and Sugiyama was able to expand beyond the Suntory Hall and went on to produce additional game music series in Japan – one of them being the ‘Orchestral Game Music Concert’ which began in 1991 using the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra to perform the music (Sorlie, 2012). These concerts made use of tracks and special arrangements from not only *Dragon Quest*, but other games series such as *Super Mario Bros*, *The Legend of Zelda* and *Final Fantasy*.

It is surprising – given the dominance of the *Final Fantasy* music upon video game music repertoire of today – that the first *Final Fantasy* concert was not performed until May 20, 1989 under the name of ‘Final Fantasy Symphonic Suite’ – six months after the release of the second game in the series; *Final Fantasy II*. Perhaps more surprising still was that it was a further thirteen years until the second dedicated *Final Fantasy* concert which took place on February 20, 2002 at Tokyo International Forum (Square Enix Music Online, N.D.) under the name *20020220 - Music from Final Fantasy*. Performed by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra (Maas, 2002), this new concert aimed to include music from every main series *Final Fantasy* game up to this point from *Final Fantasy* through to *Final Fantasy X*. It featured a two-hour set list of fifteen pieces with an additional two used as an encore. All of these were composed by series composer Nobuo Uematsu with arrangements by Shiro Hamaguchi and Masashi Hamauzu. Fig. 6.2 show the front cover to the CD recording that was released following the concert.

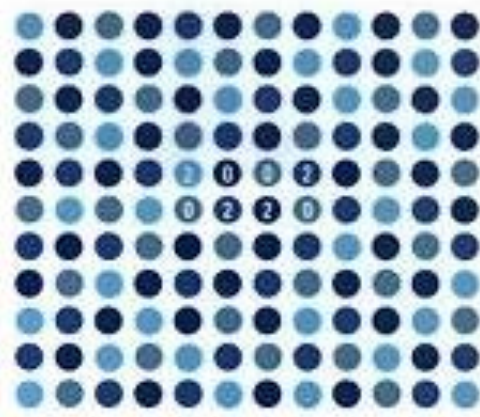


Fig. 6.2 – Front Cover to the CD recording of “20020220 - Music from Final Fantasy”

It was not until 2003 however, when video game music concerts moved out of Japan and started being embraced by a more international audience. On August 20, 2003, Thomas Böcker – a music producer – presented the ‘Symphonic Game Music Concert’ (translated from Symphonische Spielemusikkonzerte) at the Gewandhaus zu Leipzig for he had seen potential in doing a similar concert to what Sugiyama had done in Japan. Böcker, together with his arrangers - Jonne Valtonen and Roger Wanamo – approached the Leipzig Games Convention with the idea of doing an orchestral concert as part of it. In an interview with Nikolas Broman, Böcker states, ‘Obviously I was convincing enough and they said, “Okay, we can do it as our opening ceremony.” Then they said, “Okay, maybe there will be like 100 people coming, so it will be okay”’ (Böcker, 2011) Instead, the concert sold out with over 2000 tickets allocated and over half of them sold to non-VIPs. Böcker continues:

We also had all these producers attending. Hideo Kojima-san [formerly Konami’s vice president] was at the concert and Yuji Naka-san, the creator of Sonic. The president of Nintendo Europe and all the big game creators were there as well. Of course they were invited by the Games Convention management just to attend. This is why it was always a very big thing. They also had politicians and managers there and it was really top class, or let’s say high level people. They were all there. So this is why we had to be quite classy. We had to have a high standard, as much as we could (ibid).

It is interesting to note that just as Sugiyama had experienced sixteen years earlier, there was again hesitation by the established concert-programmers at Böcker’s proposal and again surprise by how many people were in attendance at the concert. However, the resultant popularity of both of these events undoubtedly helped future live performances of videogame music as well as in the creation of orchestras and ensembles dedicated to this medium.

The Eminence Symphony Orchestra (ESO) was one of these. Founded in Sydney in 2003 by the virtuoso violinist Hiroaki Yura the ESO had a focus on the music of Japanese anime and video games. The orchestra's vision was to 'inject something bold, dynamic and fresh into classical music in order to break down the barriers between the audience and the musicians, and to revive orchestra in today's society; particularly amongst youth' (Creel, 2010). Since their inception, the ESO have played in numerous concerts such as *A Night in Fantasia 2007* and the Australian *PlayStation 3 Media Launch* in February 2007. Additionally, the ESO have made professional recordings including for games (Nelson, 2011) such as *GrimGrimoire* and *Soul Calibre IV* in addition to anime films such as *The Disappearance of Haruhi Suzumiya* (dir. Tatsuya Ishihara/Yasuhiro Takemoto, 2010). As of December 2020, however, an absence of updates in addition to the orchestra's official website being available for purchase suggest that the orchestra has quietly disbanded. Fig. 6.3 shows the advertising graphic for "A Night in Fantasia 2007" featuring the characters Tifa, Cloud and Sephiroth from the JRPG *Final Fantasy VII* in the foreground, suggesting a push towards the music of JRPGs.



Fig. 6.3 – Poster for “A Night in Fantasia 2007” performed by the Eminence Symphony Orchestra

On the 10th May 2004, the 'first officially sanctioned 'Final Fantasy' concert in the United States was performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Los Angeles Master Chorale at Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles' (Classic FM, 2014) as part of the 'Dear Friends – Music from Final Fantasy' concert tour. Conducted by Miguel Harth-Bedoya and hosted by James Arnold Taylor (Schneider, 2004) – the English voice actor for Tidus from *Final Fantasy X* – all 2,265 seats at the concert were sold out in a single day, proving the appetite that fans of video games had for the music of them. In March of that year, Nobuo Uematsu stated:

I am overjoyed about the Final Fantasy concert to be held in Los Angeles... With this being the first Final Fantasy orchestral concert outside of Japan, it marks a very exciting moment in the history of the franchise (Uematsu, 2004).

Out of every video game concert series within the West however, arguably the most famous of these is the ‘Video Games Live’ (VGL) series – their logo is shown in Fig. 6.4. Created and produced by Tommy Tallarico and Jack Wall, the pair spent three years planning the show, until on July 6, 2005 at the Hollywood Bowl, the debut concert was performed featuring once again, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra to an audience of 11,000 people (Eberson, 2009). Information taken from its website states that:

Video Games Live is an immersive concert event featuring music from the most popular video games of all time. Top orchestras & choirs perform along with exclusive video footage and music arrangements, synchronized lighting, solo performers, electronic percussionists, live action and unique interactive segments to create an explosive entertainment experience (Video Games Live, 2005).



Fig. 6.4 – The “Video Games Live” Logo

The use of electronic timbres within the performances makes this show stand out amongst its contemporaries with Tallarico routinely coming on stage to add an electric guitar line. In addition, one of the more interesting aspects of VGL is how the production team works with the local orchestra of the city or town that they are touring in. The general routine is that the local orchestra will rehearse under the baton of VGL’s conductor (originally Jack Wall, currently Emmanuel Fratianni), the day before and the day of the show. This is in direct contrast with a conventional orchestra that would traditionally tour around bringing both their set-list of pieces in addition to all the relevant equipment with them. For VGL however, this has unquestionably not impacted upon ticket sales and therefore the audience attending the concerts.

From 2005, the rate at which orchestras and concert-managers began to organise video game music concerts began to increase. Another *Final Fantasy* inspired concert was held in Yokohama, Japan on February 18, 2006 under the name *Voices – Music from Final Fantasy*. Three months later, an additional video game music concert series began under the name ‘PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live’. The advertising graphic is

shown in Fig. 6.5. This concert series was created by Jason Michael Paul and ran between 2006 and 2010 until it was renamed 'Replay: Symphony of Heroes'. Paul states; 'I was on tour with Pavarotti and I used a Final Fantasy soundtrack to test out a brand-new sound system at the stadium we were working at, and that's where I had an epiphany... I kind of had one of those moments where I saw it, a vision of what I can imagine being taking video game music to the masses' (Paul, 2016). After inviting Square Enix to Pavarotti's farewell tour, Paul set about on producing the concert series. He invited Arnie Roth to conduct along with associate conductor Andy Brick (Game Pro Staff, 2007) and argues that the show is a 'straightforward music program... [designed] to keep the arts alive in a way that is classy' (Musgrove, 2006).

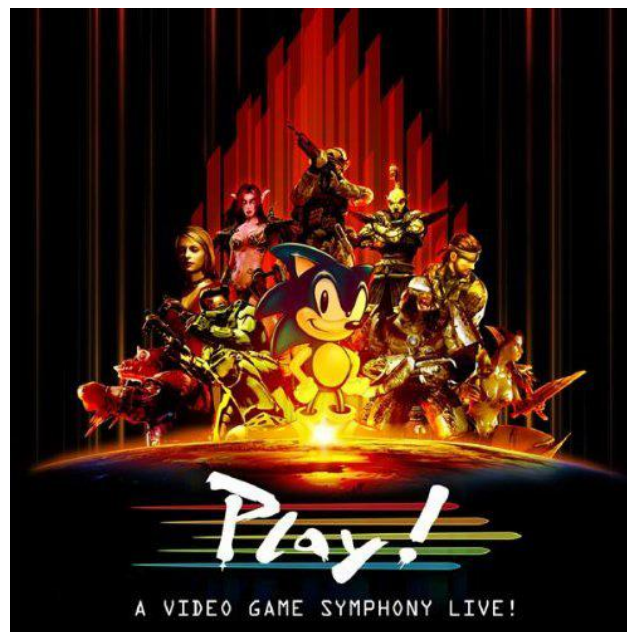


Fig. 6.5 – “Play! – A Video Game Symphony” Poster

Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy began in 2007 in Stockholm, Sweden and continues to date. Supported by Thomas Böcker initially, the concerts are conducted by Arnie Roth and follow a similar format to the *Dear Friends: Music from Final Fantasy* series. Again, this series features music exclusively from the *Final Fantasy* series and tours internationally featuring several new arrangements each year – a result of the *Final Fantasy* series' enduring commercial and critical success both as a piece of multimedia and for its music. The logo for *Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy* is shown below in Fig. 6.6:



Fig. 6.6 – “Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy” Logo

The Video Game Orchestra (VGO) was formed in 2009 with its logo shown below in Fig. 6.7. Based in Boston, USA the orchestra was founded by Shota Makama, a graduate of the Berklee College of Music and comprises of a group of Boston based musicians containing both young and established talent from both local communities and internationally. Like with Video Games Live, the VGO aimed to include a variety of technology into their sound including an independent rock band to differentiate itself from other purely acoustic based performances. They have since collaborated with composers such as Nobuo Uematsu, Jack Wall and Yuki Kaijura and in 2013 announced a partnership with Square Enix and Masashi Hamauzu to record the orchestral tracks for *Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII* (Sorlie, 2013). As a way of distinguishing itself from other video game concert series, its about page states: ‘Video Game Orchestra is a Boston-based project that performs its own "rockestral" arrangements of popular video game music with a rock band, singers and orchestra’ (VGO-Online, 2020) – clearly stating that the rock band is a major factor within its concerts in comparison to its contemporaries.



Fig. 6.7 – The Video Game Orchestra Logo

The last of the most well-known game concerts to be mentioned is the Nintendo and Jason Michael Paul Productions¹⁴⁴ collaboration – *The Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddesses* with its logo shown below in Fig. 6.8. Starting in 2012, it features arrangements by Chad Seiter and conducted by Eimear Noone, Susie Seiter and Amy Andersson this is the biggest non-JRPG, specific video game music series currently performing (as of June 2019). It must be said however, that *The Legend of Zelda* series features many similarities to JRPGs and with Nintendo being a Japanese company, the music and its influences undoubtedly share many similarities with those of the JRPG.



Fig. 6.8 – “The Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddesses” Logo

To conclude this section, it is obvious that there are many other concerts that have not been listed in this background. Nevertheless, it is my view that these are amongst the most well-known – and as a consequence influential – of all video game concerts that have been performed since Koichi Sugiyama’s *Dragon Quest in Concert*. The music of JRPGs is clearly – and heavily – represented within the video game music programme. Even *The Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddesses* – one of the few enduring touring video game music concerts – is a Nintendo and thus of Japanese origin and whilst it may not be accepted as a JRPG in its ludic genre, it shares many similarities with the JRPGs mentioned across this thesis. Consequently, with this allure of JRPG music identified, it is necessary to consider the factors that surround the JRPG musical style’s continuing success within the concert hall.

6.2 Concert Style

It is important to consider the etiquette at the above examples of video game music concerts in order to appreciate the types of music that are played at them. For instance, a concert-goer is more likely to stand

¹⁴⁴ As ‘PLAY! A Video Game Symphony’ had been.

and dance at a pop/rock concert than compared to a classical concert¹⁴⁵. As such, the types of pieces are likely to change accordingly. Nevertheless, for all types of concerts, one aspect remains constant – sociability:

Attending a concert is a much more social way of experiencing music. One must go out to a live event, often accompanied by family members or friends, meeting people before or after the concert or during a break. Moreover, the chance of mentioning the event in conversation is higher than with listening to music at home (Roose & Stichele, 2010, p. 208).

In the case of video games, this is intriguing as many games are single-player games only. As such, the simple fact of a shared event where players of video game players come together to experience music is almost an antithesis to the source of this music.

For the vast majority of video game concerts in style alone, they sit in an almost unique position, somewhere between orchestral concerts of the Western Classical tradition and popular music concerts. High-definition displays are filled with projections of footage from games, fan-art or anything in between (see Fig. 6.9). Lasers and coloured concert lights parade the hall, but most often, it is a sit-down affair much the same as for a typical Classical orchestral concert i.e., the audience sits in seats in a defined concert space watching an orchestra play under the baton of a conductor. The etiquette of the audience is more relaxed than the rigid formality of most Classical concerts today and the dress code will often feature cos-play, yet this is still far removed from that of a Rock concert where concert-goers are often likely to sing and dance to the performers' act. To that end, I offer a simile; that of the British pantomime. Here, like with video game music concerts, audiences (consisting of children to grandparents) will dress informally (and sometimes in costume) remaining in their seats whilst a musical director conducts a show. The audience is encouraged to join in at times, and there is often audience interaction.

¹⁴⁵ For more information, William Gibbons' chapter 'Classifying Game Music' in his 2018 book *Unlimited Replays: Video Games and Classical Music* can be consulted.



Fig. 6.9 – Photo of *Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy* with a high-definition display showcasing a cutscene from *Final Fantasy X*.

Nevertheless, for its apparent Classical-style roots, Stephanie Pitts et al. consider why the orchestral experience follows a standard format across the globe and this in turn can be argued as to why video game music concerts follow this convention:

An orchestral concert at its best has a sense of spectacle and occasion. Often taking place in one of the more formal buildings in a city, and representing a costly and therefore considered night out for regular attenders, going to hear an international symphony orchestra should be a memorable musical event. The music heard might be challenging or familiar, but there will be an expectation of quality – a trust in the professional musicians to be committed and passionate about their work, and to the concert promoters to provide value for money and a physically comfortable yet emotionally exhilarating experience (Pitts et al., 2013, p. 65).

Professional video game music concerts offer this. Professional orchestras such as the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Czech National Symphony Orchestra or the Los Angeles Philharmonic must rely on their brand: a critically negative review for the quality of their performance, or the quality of the arrangements that they play could be incredibly damaging for them. With ticket sales to these performances selling out in days (NPR 2008, Classicfm.com 2014) and video footage of these orchestras performing video game music being readily available online, this trust that the audience continues to put into the traditional orchestra is undoubtedly of mutual benefit to both the performers and the concert-goers alike. Those that attend are surrounded by like-minded enthusiasts of the games and most have experienced the music originally as part of the ludic experience of playing the game itself. To then come together to experience it linearly away from any other distractions that a game presents is undoubtedly the ‘emotionally exhilarating experience’ that Pitts et. al describes.

6.3 The Data Set

The main topic of this chapter revolves around the data set gained from the set lists of non-specific video game music concerts. This description of ‘non-specific’ concerts is defined as a concert that includes music from a variety of games across many different genres and developers. It is important that this distinction be made as otherwise the results would be heavily dominated by the music of both *Final Fantasy* (the ‘Distant Worlds’ concert series) and *The Legend of Zelda* (the ‘Symphony of the Goddesses’ series) as these are specific video game music concerts that focus only on the music of their respective games. Various sources have been used to generate this database, which has resulted in a data set of N=839 pieces spanning 61 concerts¹⁴⁶ over 30 years (1991 – 2020) across numerous countries around the world including streamed online-only concerts in 2020 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic of that year. See **Appendix 6.1**. As an additional point, for those concerts that featured film music within their set list – including the film *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children* – these tracks have been removed from the data set as have any original introductory music such as “Play: Opening Fanfare” from *Play: A Video Games Symphony Live!*.

Out of the six columns contained within the table, the most important one for this paper is the ‘Main Ludic Genre’ column. Whilst it is known that ‘the concept of genre in games lacks consensus, and certain assumptions must be made to proceed past the problem of generic formulation in games’ (Whalen, 2004, p. 8), it is important to reiterate that in this data set, the game’s *main* genre is listed. Nevertheless, even with these blurred boundaries taken into consideration, one game genre dominates the set list of concerts/compilation CDs more than any other – that of the JRPG.

In order to visualise this dominion that music from JRPGs has upon video game music concerts, consider Fig. 6.10 which shows the genre of game of each track. However, whilst there are 41 identifiable genres of game within the main table, for visual purposes the graph only shows those categories with ten or more results. Whilst most of the sources of information used provided both game name and track title, there are fifteen games within the data set that could not be identified and as such are shown on the graph as ‘?’.

¹⁴⁶ To reduce the domination of ‘Video Games Live’ that features multiple concert series a month, only one concert has been included per year. To include them all would warp the data in the same way as including ‘Distant Worlds’ or ‘Symphony of the Goddesses’ as the concerts contain many of the same pieces within their set-lists. The Video Games Live website (2020) details that they have performed 490 concerts since its first concert on 06 July 2005.

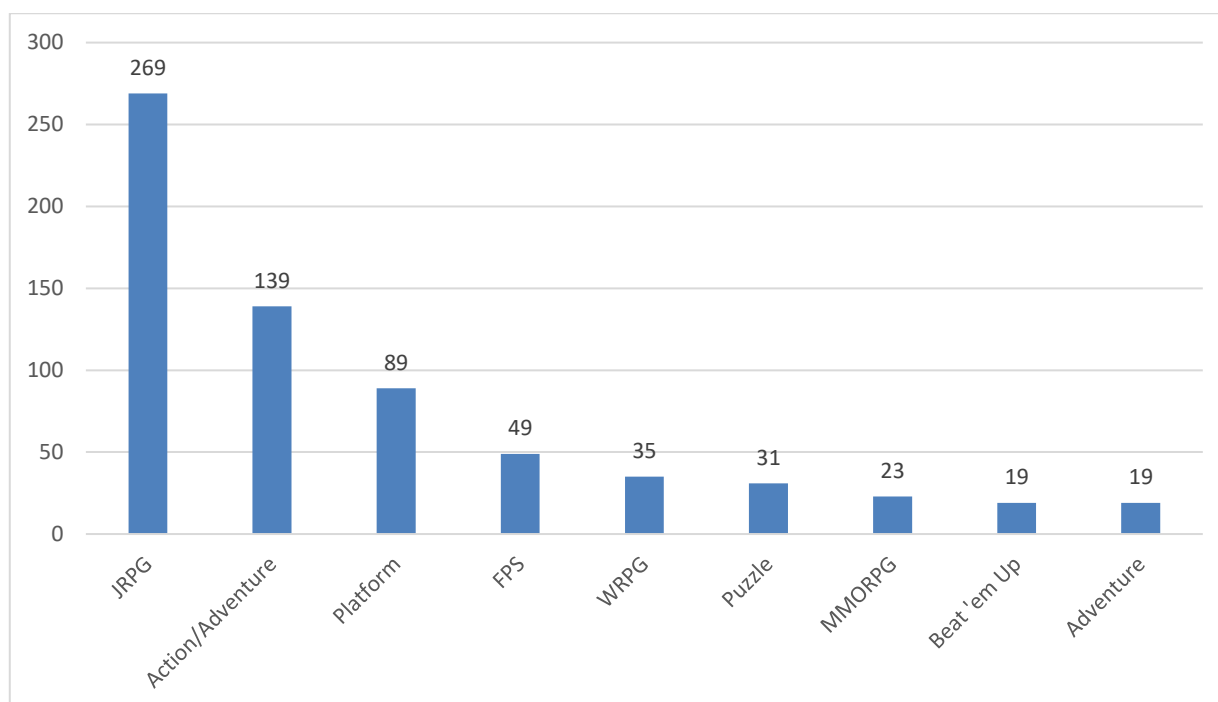


Fig. 6.10 – No. of tracks used within video game music concerts by ludic genre. Values of <15 are not shown. JRPG = Japanese RPG. FPS = First Person Shooter. WRPG = Western RPG. MMORPG = Massively Multiplayer Online RPG.

Of the total number of pieces listed in the spreadsheet, a notable 32.97% (N=269) pieces are classified as a JRPG – a number greater than the very broad ludic genre “Action/Adventure” and “Platform” games such as *Super Mario* and *Sonic the Hedgehog* combined.

6.2.1 JRPG Music

The most obvious suggestion as to why the music of JRPGs is so popular within video game music concerts would be to focus on the music itself, namely the style of music that is played. However, as that has been shown throughout Chapters Two, Three and Four, the sheer variety of musical genres that occurs within JRPGs mean that style alone cannot be attributed to their popularity.¹⁴⁷ After all, Logan Byam – a Japanese Collection Editor at the online Videogame Music Archive noted similar evidence for this as far back as 1999 when talking to Matthew Belinkie: ‘Pretty much every style of music has been incorporated into a game at some point or another’ (Byam, 1999); a facet particularly apparent in JRPGs. To provide evidence of the multitude of genres found within video game music concerts, take for example the six purposefully broad categories of music below and examples within video game music concerts of pieces that match them:

¹⁴⁷ There is a caveat here as it assumed that the concert selections are equally distributed across the styles of the game.

- **Western Classical-influenced music:**
 - Orchestral Game Music Concert 2 - *Dragon Quest V* – ‘Bridal Waltz’
 - A Night in Fantasia 2007 – *Kingdom Hearts* – ‘Fantasia Alla Marcla for Piano, Chorus and Orchestra’
- **Western Pop/J-Pop-influenced music:**
 - Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014 – *Final Fantasy X-2* – ‘1000 Words/A Wish That Spans the Ages’
 - Press Start 2008: Symphony of Games – *Final Fantasy IX* – ‘Melodies of Life’
- **Western Rock-influenced music:**
 - VGL Level 2 - *Final Fantasy VII* - ‘One Winged Angel’
 - Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014 – *Tales of Symphonia* – ‘Fighting of the Spirit’
- **Jazz-influenced music:**
 - PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live! – *Final Fantasy X* – ‘Swing de Chocobo’
 - Press Start 2007: Symphony of Games - *Sakura Wars* – ‘Manifesto! Imperial Flower Assault Troupe’
- **Sacred-influenced music:**
 - Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2010 – *Final Fantasy X* – ‘Hymn of the Fayth/Prelude’
 - Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert – *Xenosaga: Episode I* – ‘Ormus and the Resurrection’
- **Solo piano music:**
 - VGL Level 2 – *Final Fantasy* – ‘Solo Piano Medley’
 - Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016 – *Final Fantasy X* – ‘To Zanarkand’

Therefore, the conclusion that must be drawn from the above examples is that specific music genres do not provide us with any meaningful evidence as to why it is that JRPG music so dominates the set-lists of video game music concerts or compilation CDs. With that in mind however, there is still one feature that all of these examples share: that of melody, which will be discussed later.

6.2.2 Best-Selling Games

Next it would be valuable to consider if JRPGs are amongst the best-selling games world-wide as to why their music is so popular amongst fans and concert producers. Below is a list of the sixteen best-selling individual games of all time up to February 2015 (Dizon, 2015). See **table 6.1**.

Game Title	Publisher	Date	Copies Sold (millions)	Game Genre
<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Bethesda	2011	20	WRPG
<i>Mario Kart DS</i>	Nintendo	2005	23.3	Racing
<i>Call of Duty: Black Ops</i>	Activision	2010	24.8	FPS
<i>Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas</i>	Rockstar	2004	27.5	Action/Adventure
<i>Super Mario Bros. Wii</i>	Nintendo	2009	27.8	Platform
<i>Wii Play</i>	Nintendo	2007	28.2	Party Games
<i>Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2</i>	Activision	2009	28.5	FPS
<i>New Super Mario Bros.</i>	Nintendo	2006	30.7	Platform
<i>Wii Sports Resort</i>	Nintendo	2009	32.6	Sports
<i>Mario Kart Wii</i>	Nintendo	2008	34.3	Racing
<i>Grand Theft Auto V</i>	Rockstar	2013	45	Action/Adventure
<i>Minecraft</i>	Mojang et. al	2011	60	Sandbox
<i>Wii Sports</i>	Nintendo	2006	82.9	Sports
<i>Tetris</i>	Nintendo et. al	1984	100+	Puzzle

Table 6.1 - List of the top 15 best-selling video games up until February 2015.

The original article goes on to state that the two best-selling franchises – as compared to individual games – are both Nintendo published games: *Super Mario* – a platform series – and *Pokémon* – a JRPG (as already mentioned in section 3.3.3. Nevertheless, even taking Pokémon into account, the data in the database reveals that of the 701 tracks, only twelve of them belong to the Pokémon franchise.

Therefore, with neither the style of the music nor the popularity of the games providing any satisfactory answers as to why the music of JRPGs is so popular, other theories need to be considered.

6.2.3 Playing a JRPG

Across this thesis we have discussed the attributes that CRPGs have, both narrative, ludically and culturally. As stated above, JRPGs have incorporated influences from a variety of cultures, building upon them for many years or iterations of the franchise. Ludically, the games are much more diverse than the general Action-RPG found in WRPG, with JRPGs incorporating turn-based game-play just as much as real-time combat, tactical combat¹⁴⁸ or even card-based games such as *Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories*. Narratively, the plots of JRPGs similarly take a variety of forms, incorporating elements that would inevitably feel very alien in a WRPG and generally place the player within the story, rather than having the story revolving around the player. Musically, the incorporation of cues within these games are stylistically varied, repetitious and melodic, in comparison to the relative homogeny and ambience found in WRPGs. Within the typical JRPG, character themes – or leitmotifs – can be manipulated, building upon a central musical idea that is usually highly melodic in nature. Summers states:

¹⁴⁸ For example *Final Fantasy Tactics* where pieces are moved around a grid in a similar fashion to chess.

The total time, on average, that a player spends with any one game is significantly longer than the running time of most mainstream films, and even longer than most individual Wagner operas... Games are able to include a significant duration of musical material, and game scores are often produced in the form of short clips of music that are assembled to create the cues as they sound in the game. In the chronological span and flexible assembly of musical output afforded by this context, the “musical canvas” is very much available for the “expansion of the leitmotif” (Summers, 2014, p. 206).

A further quote from Tim Summers – this time in an interview with ‘Video Game Music Online’ – outlines this effectively:

The idea is that Western RPGs kind of say, okay, here’s your world; make your adventure, within certain limits. It’s musically focused on actions and places (battle themes, location themes, etc.). The point is the player freedom, as opposed to JRPGs, where you’re following a specific set of characters and a specific storyline, and as a result you have this very thematic, melodic musical style. These focus on character themes with very obvious musical communication about the roles you play. And that ends up being material that people love and listen to repeatedly (Summers, 2016).

Jessica Green’s article ‘Understanding the Score: Film Music Communicating to and Influencing the Audience’ backs up Summers’ statement when applied to both films and games:

Films [and games] that fail to use much music or fail to use it well often have a problem involving the audience as completely as films that embrace music as a tool that can expose the inner feelings and thoughts of characters and can shape the way that viewers feel about what’s happening on screen (Green, 2010, p. 81).

In all of these statements, it is clear that character themes – and leitmotifs – are valued as being sentimental for audiences; a musical memory of a relationship with a character. This is mirrored across concert hall set-lists around the world with music such as the love theme from *Romeo and Juliet* by Tchaikovsky, “Princess Leia’s Theme” by John Williams from *Star Wars* or “Rose’s Theme” by Murray Gold from the British television series *Doctor Who*.¹⁴⁹ These three examples evoke the memories of characters, or how these characters relate with others within the ballet or film. For players of JRPGs their relationship with these characters will be built up over many times the number of hours found in other forms of media. As such, through both repetition of music and the development of character themes through leitmotivic manipulation this aspect of JRPG musical score design is an area that many other ludic genres of game cannot replicate.

¹⁴⁹ Whilst “The Love Theme” from *Romeo and Juliet* is not a character theme per se, it does relate to the play’s two main characters. In all three of these examples, they have been played in orchestral concerts around the world.

It is prudent to consider whether we can break the tracks down into the categories Chatman uses to define a story within his narrative model and how I made use of them within Chapters Four and Five. The categories given are:

- **Area:** Whilst some video games composers differentiate the difference between area tracks into *Explore*, *Public* and *Dungeon* tracks, their objective as suggested in Chapters Four and Five is the same; to accompany exploration through any number of different settings.
- **Action:** CRPGs rely on combat as a core play mechanic. The level of combat can be modified by the level of emotional tension that the situation calls upon which is then reflected in the music. As suggested before in this thesis, fighting a standard enemy in the game is less tense than fighting the final boss of the game. Nevertheless, for simplicity, sub-categories of battle music have not been applied.
- **Character:** Character themes are defined by music being associated with either a particular character or object. For instance, in *Xenosaga* (Namco, 2002) the *Dämmerung* is a huge spaceship whose prowess in combat is formidable. As such, it has a very ominous piece of music that accompanies it when it appears on screen. Similarly, the 'Red Wings' in *Final Fantasy IV* (Square, 1991) is a military force. As with the *Dämmerung* a specific piece of music accompanies them.
- **Other:** If a track is a medley or suite of pieces, it has been labelled as 'other' so that it does not distort the categories of the solo tracks or if the music is heard in multiple situations.
- **Special:** The tracks that are left over consist of main themes, credit themes or music used to accompany cutscenes.

To visualise these categories with the JRPG tracks listed in the spreadsheet, Fig. 6.11 is presented below:

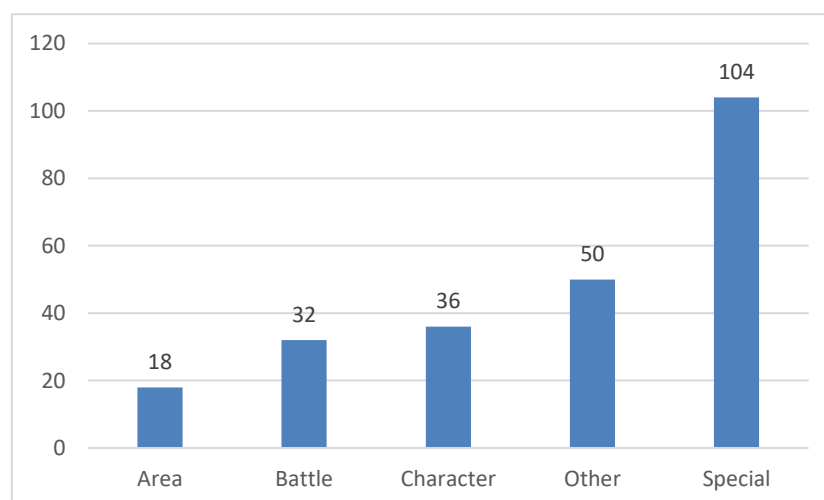


Fig. 6.11 – JRPG tracks by type.

This graph provides rich material for discussion for all five categories which will be outlined below:

Area

The use of physical metaphors to help with the organization of information presents important advantages from the point of view of navigability, ease of access to particular items of information, and orientation of the user while exploring a particular set of data (Peinado, Ancochea & Gervás, 2004, p. 1).

It is possible to argue from this statement that video games that require exploration – like RPGs in general – require music in specific areas in order to help them navigate this area; particularly if the narrative dictates that they must travel to various places multiple times. In this scenario, the music has become a metaphor – a representation of the virtual landscape that the player is trying to navigate in order to help recall or create a memory of this location. Elizabeth Medina-Gray explores this through the context of *The Legend of Zelda: Windwaker* within her thesis *Modular Structure and Function in Early 21st-Century Video Game Music* suggesting that for this particular game which sees the hero Link sailing across the sea to a number of disparate islands, ‘musical disjunction is the only indication that the player has moved from one area of the game to another’ (Medina-Gray, 2014, p. 152). Examples of such tracks exist throughout the spreadsheet such as “Palace Minuet” from *Dragon Quest IV* in the original ‘Orchestral Game Music Concert’ in 1991 right the way through to “Bros on the Road: Unplugged” from *Final Fantasy XV* in the Video Games Orchestra online- performance in 2019. Both area themes are stylistically different; “Palace Minuet” is a Classical-style minuet featuring only a string orchestra, whereas “Bros on the Road” features just two violins and a viola, two acoustic guitars, keyboard, drum kit and electric bass in a style more associated with country-pop music. Music used to represent settings or ‘exploratory’ tracks in game music therefore strongly link to Aaron Copland’s article in the New York Times in that ‘music can create a more convincing atmosphere of time and place’ (Copland, 1949, p. 28).

Nevertheless, it is interesting to see what is not included. Certainly, it can be argued that there are locations within a video game that are less important to the overarching narrative than others; particularly if the player only needs to visit them a few times or just has to pass through them in order to get to a more significant destination. In this regard, the music that is playing is less likely to have the emotional impact upon the player as other types of cue would. Consider the following hypothetical example of a typical JRPG. A player must get to a boss but the fight is tough and they keep dying. From the save point or check point, they must cross a grassy field, enter a foreboding cave until finally they battle said boss. For the areas of grassy field and foreboding cave, both of these have musical cues accompanying the player through them. However, by the time the player has attempted the boss fight multiple times, the act of getting to the fight is now has a level of disconnect – only the fight matters. As such, the music heard in these cues as likely ignored which is

possibly the reason as to why these cues are the least likely heard in video game music concerts. Conversely, the battle theme and hopefully the immediate excitement, exhilaration and relief upon victory which all are likely to be accompanied by music will likely stay in the player's mind much more.

Action

As has been discussed in Chapter Four, combat themes in JRPGs occur during either standard fights, boss fights or final boss fights and occur N=32. Sometimes requiring an introduction that transports the player from the screen they were previously on to the combat screen, the music is almost always fast-paced, in a minor key featuring a heavy percussive element that drives the piece forwards. Take for example, "Fighting of the Spirits" from *Tales of Symphonia* from the 'Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014' concert. Just as with the original version of the track, this arrangement features the typical idioms associated with a battle theme; an allegro tempo, scored in A-minor with relentless orchestral percussion. Winifred Phillips describes these types of themes as needing to 'stimulate the excitement level of the player during periods of heightened activity' (Phillips, 2014, p. 151). Paul Hoffert concurs and adds 'since musical tempos are related to heart rate, it makes sense to use faster tempos when onscreen characters' heart rates rise because they're excited or in the midst of action. Consequently, action scenes mostly use up-tempo music, frequently with hot jazz or rock rhythms' (Hoffert, 2007, p. 67).

Compare this statement however, with the notion described above of an audience in much the same style of a stereotypical orchestral concert. Whilst the tension and excitement created suits the interactive nature of video games when the music is played through headphones or speakers, a prolonged period of musical and emotional tension in the concert hall without a form of release does not arguably lend itself to a balanced concert programme. The fact that a concert programme will swap between styles in order to create a balanced set-list should not be a surprise however, and has been a consideration of concert organisers since the Classical Period; '...all eighteenth-century concert programmes are notable for their carefully balanced mixture of styles and media' (Sadie, 1958, p. 27).

Other

The 'Other' category consists of medleys and suites and occurs N=50 times. The Oxford Dictionary of Music defines a medley as 'a collection of parts or passages of well-known songs or pieces arranged so that the end of one merges into the start of the next' (Kennedy, 1996, p. 468). Examples of these range from medleys of pieces belonging to the same game such as "Final Fantasy VII Suite" in the 2009 'Video Games Orchestra Concert', to multimedia suites such as "Pokemedley" in the 'Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011' concert. This particular example showcased music from both the Game Boy Advance/Nintendo DS *Pokémon* games as well as the animated television series. Other medleys showcase multiple games such as the 'Keep

Fighting’ in the 2012 ‘Live at Columbia Theatre’ event where a record seventeen different games were referenced in one coherent piece of game music (according to the spreadsheet at least).

Of course, the popularity of combining pieces into a grander work is not a recent phenomenon. Medleys have been popular in concerts since the early-to-mid nineteenth century and the advent of ‘salon music’ as described by William Weber; ‘public concerts became closely linked to it... since a large proportion of works performed at concerts were either opera excerpts or virtuosic fantasies or medleys of well-known opera tunes’ (Weber, 2004, p. xxiv). It is interesting to note that these musical highlights originated from the opera of the time – a multimedia experience involving thematic material that would be associated with a character or particular part of a wider story, even if this is a little before Wagner’s *Ring Cycle* and the advent of the leitmotif.

Arguments can be made as to the amount of JRPG medleys found in video game concerts. 34 tracks of the 195 shown in the above graph are medleys which equates to 17% - close to the 20% average that we would expect if each category was equal. There are undoubtedly many advantages to medleys – as long as the arranger can find a thematic link, it is possible to combine several pieces together without too much difficulty. This way multiple tracks can be performed in quick succession without having to musically develop the piece beyond the original track length. This can be very useful for older video game pieces whose length might have been restricted by restrictions placed upon the original composer. Likewise, players’ memories of these games might be limited to remembering a specific motif or ostinato and to develop a piece beyond this would not make commercial sense. The main disadvantage of medleys is arguably the length of time that it must run for. Giving a concert piece the title of ‘medley’ suggests a longer piece by the sheer fact of incorporating several videogame pieces into one musically coherent track. Transitions between pieces, especially if they are stylistically different can take time which ultimately leads to a longer length for a medley. Concert programme designers must therefore balance the benefits of a medley with the interests of an audience – many of whom may not have played this particular game.

Ultimately however, trying to read too much into the distribution and popularity of pieces that make up the ‘other’ category – medleys and suites – is futile as their exact make-up can consist of such a wide variety of themes that span multiple different styles.

Character

Similarly, character themes equate to N=36 of the make-up of JRPG tracks played at the videogame concerts listed in the spreadsheet. This is a remarkable albeit probably coincidental feature of the spreadsheet – that of the five categories, character themes should take up its exact allocation if going by averages alone.

Character themes can range across multiple different styles as they attempt to represent some aspect of their corresponding character. Take for example one of the more recurring character themes listed in the spreadsheet; “Aerith’s Theme” at N=5 entries. On the official website for the game under characters (her character model is shown in Fig. 6.12 & 6.13), Aerith is described as follows:

Young, beautiful, and somewhat mysterious, Aerith meets Cloud while selling flowers on the streets of Midgar. She decides to join him soon after. Her unusual abilities allow her to heal her allies, but she often seems more interested in the deepening love triangle between herself, Cloud, and Tifa
- *Final Fantasy VII* (Square Enix Archive, 1997).

Aerith is a flower seller who lives in the Sector 5 slums, who first meets Cloud on the streets of Midgar after the bombing of Mako Reactor 1. Shinra has kept a close eye on her ever since she was a child, as she has the ability to hear the voice of the planet. She is often found tending a modest bed of flowers at an old church in Sector 5

- *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* (Square-Enix-Games, 2020).



Fig. 6.12 & 6.13 – Aerith of *Final Fantasy VII* and its remake shown in the opening cutscenes respectively.

There is a wealth of literature concerning psychology within film music that can be used to help discuss character themes within video games. Beginning with Aaron Copland’s article on film music once more, he writes that ‘music can be used to underline or create psychological refinements – the unspoken thoughts of a character or the unseen implications of a situation’ (Copland, 1948, p. 28). Later studies, such as Tan, Spackman and Bezdek’s 2007 piece on interpretations of film characters’ emotions, state that ‘music can interact with visuals in more complex and subtle ways when the audience’s focus is on human characters, thereby affecting the progression of the narrative’ (Tan, Spackman & Bezdek, 2007, p. 136). Moreover, they go onto state that ‘even when not presented simultaneously with the main action sequence of a film, music can influence viewers’ perception of film characters’ emotions’ (ibid, p. 146). Meanwhile, Hoeckner et. al,

suggest that ‘underscoring not only helps viewers attribute to a character a certain state of mind they recognize, but what they know about character’s feelings may also influence how they feel about the character’ (Hoeckner et. al, 2011, p. 150). Ultimately, we can return to Huron however and the nature of expectation. These associations of the combination of various musical elements have been built up through a shared musical vocabulary over many years. As discussed through Chapter Four, for JRPGs, the incorporation of a variety of different international musical styles has led to a shared musical vocabulary with many of the same characteristics as those found in the west, even if stylistically the music may vary. For character themes in these longer, narrative-driven stories of JRPGs they are of paramount importance to the plot and therefore must be something that the players can expect which ultimately leads to coherency. Players become invested in the characters, particularly the main protagonists and antagonists as Dorothee Hefnerl et al. writes:

The way players ‘fill in’ the role offered to them shapes the properties and course of the game, which implies that players are not mere observers of the media environment (and of the media characters in it) as they are in television settings, but that they actively participate in the story unfolding on screen... McDonald and Kim report that young video game players perceive no distance at all to their game protagonists, but “identify quite closely” with them (Hefner, Klimmt, Vorderer, 2007, p. 41).

Therefore, it is not unreasonable to suggest that players become invested in these characters’ themes and leitmotifs which when implemented effectively, can provide an understanding of a character’s intentions (even before any dialogue may have been spoken). As such, it becomes understandable as to why character themes are so popular amongst non-specific video game music concerts.

Special

At N=104, the pieces of music from JRPGs categorised as ‘special’ dwarf all other categories, including those of other genres of games. Equating to 44% of all the JRPG tracks or 15% of the entire spreadsheet, ‘special’ tracks are those defined as main themes, credit themes or music used to accompany cutscenes.

It is with this category that ‘the similarities between video games and films [become] numerous—especially games with more narrative-driven content (like many of the Final Fantasy titles)’ (Whalen, 2004, p. 5). It is of no surprise that ‘music accompanies [these] various cinematics within a game – whether they are cut scenes, introductions, endings, or story transitions. These pieces of media are usually linear and help propel the storyline forward or signal the end of a game level’ (Horowitz & Looney, 2014, p. 99). Furthermore,

as Karen Collins writes; ‘the production of audio for these sequences is very similar to film sound production’ (Collins, 2008, p. 5).¹⁵⁰

Therefore, it is once again useful to apply film-music theory here – something particularly interesting in this scenario as for certain critics and players, ‘cut-scenes provide an experience in direct opposition to gameplay... it is the act of watching rather than playing that many critics and scholars are hostile towards. For some... it is grounds for altogether ignoring the cutscene’ (Browning, 2016). For CRPGs however, there is strong evidence to suggest that players play them as much for their narrative as their gameplay – as argued across this thesis. The evidence from a musical perspective at least suggests this much as the spreadsheet shows.

The aesthetic of cinematic realism has powerfully influenced the aesthetic of video games to the extent that it can be argued contemporary video-game designers do not attempt to represent an unmediated sense of reality, but rather the heightened reality of a cinematic experience. Those working in video-game music often cite film music as a model: “We want to take the experience that everybody has at the movies and make it into something that you control... every game audio designer will tell you that the ultimate goal is movie-quality game soundtracks” (Sexton, 2007, p. 59).

Hooper agrees, stating that in these instances, ‘(non diegetic) music is accepted, even expected, because videogame players’ expectations are often informed, inter-medially, by filmic convention’ (Hooper, 2018, p. 125) – a further parallel to Huron’s theory of expectation.

Whilst Tan, Spackman & Bezdek presented an argument to suggest music can affect a scene even when not synchronised with the action, for cutscenes and main themes at least, it is perhaps obvious that they cast their ‘meanings forward, strengthening the diegetic, rhetorical dimension of the event to come’ (Klevjer, 2002, p. 200). Anahid Kassabian adds:

The theme song, where it exists is generally given a very high degree of attention. Audience members may be familiar with before they enter the viewing situation, from radio play, television, advertisements, or film trailers. It occurs most often during the main titles and/or establishing sequence of the film, when the film has not yet “absorbed” the audience into the narrative world of the film. (It may, and often does, also appear later in the film, functioning as a kind of leitmotiv.) There is a wide range of possibilities [for the theme], depending on the complexity of visual material

¹⁵⁰ Giles Hooper meanwhile defines eight sub-categories of cutscene each with slightly different nuances at taking control away from the player in order to perform or show a pre-determined animation or story advancement (Hooper, 2018, p. 117).

– for example, action, editing pace, framing, focal length and other auditory material – within the scene, and aspects of the music itself (Kassabian, 2001, p. 53).

It is not difficult to fit video games within Kassabian’s explanation of video game music and the game’s main theme. They are usually given a high degree of attention, having been heard either in game trailers or in the main titles and are often used as a leitmotif; particularly in fantasy games like the majority of JRPGs which often have heroic themes for example *Fire Emblem 2: The Sacred Stones* or *Monster Hunter*. These themes are often manipulated to suit scenes happening later in the game, particularly if these happen to be cutscenes.

Credit themes on the other hand – as stated in Chapter Three – tend to fall into two categories: either unique pieces (typically songs) or medleys – a recap of the themes that have been played throughout the game. In the latter category, examples include for instance, the ending to *Grandia*, *Golden Sun* or *Final Fantasy VII: Remake*, though they differ from ‘other’ pieces in the spreadsheet by virtue of the fact that they were purposefully composed for the game itself rather than being merged into a single piece by an external arranger. They are almost identical in purpose to the credit themes of films which also are often medleys; take for example the “Throne Room/End Titles” for *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* or the “End Credits” for *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (dir. Columbus, 2001).

6.4 Orchestrating, Arranging & Licensing Video Game Music for Concerts

The overriding consideration that must guide the transcriber is taste. We must respect the work, the composer, and the period in which the piece was conceived, but we must use our best judgement as we make every decision concerning the music to be transcribed (Adler, 2002, p. 667).

Orchestration is – as with all areas of music – a skill in its own right. The quote above by Samuel Adler in his textbook for students of orchestration neatly summarises the factors an orchestrator/arranger needs to consider what transcribing a piece of video game music for concert. No longer able to rely on a sound-chip or pre-programmed tracks to bear the brunt of unplayable music, an orchestrator must arrange these pieces for the ensemble who will be responsible for playing these tracks.

Fortunately, for many pieces of JRPG music, the chosen piece begins life as orchestral in style. Taking a few examples from the relevant categories of JRPG listed above it is possible to show this based on their original in-game arrangements:

- **Area:** *Chrono Trigger* “Wind Scene” – String orchestra with light percussion
- **Battle:** *Final Fantasy VI* “Dancing Mad” – Orchestra with organ, choir, synth & rock instrumentation
- **Character:** *Trials of Mana* “Meridian Child” – strings, brass and percussion

- **Special:** *Grandia* “Main Theme” – Orchestra with piano, electric guitar, bass guitar and drum kit.

It is not unreasonable to suggest therefore that such tracks are easier to transcribe for orchestra if the original sound is orchestral in nature. After all, ‘one cannot be properly said to be writing for a particular medium unless one takes account of what is involved for musicians in working with and within that medium’ (Davies, 1988, p. 218). If that task has been done to some degree already by the original composer, then that makes the transcription that bit less time-consuming and ultimately more cost-productive.

There are also plenty of fan-arrangements of video game musical scores that have since been utilised by orchestras – with permission of the arranger. Take for example VGOScore, a website run by the founder Andrés Soto with the ‘main aim of VGOScore is to take these wonderful compositions to the concert halls through the free publication of scores on the website’ (Soto, 2018). He goes on to state that ‘all the scores contained in this website are arrangements / transcriptions or versions of videogames’s soundtracks, which are shared non-profit and with the sole purpose of conducting didactic and educational concerts for the players’ community and general public’ (ibid). VGOScore offers orchestral scores from a wide variety of games, however all of them are very thematic. The number of JRPG covers are plentiful including *Final Fantasy*, *Pokémon*, *Undertale*, *Octopath Traveler*, *Xenoblade Chronicles* and *Fire Emblem*.

Licensing video game music to be used is also an essential part of any concert, particularly in comparison to orchestral music of the western classical tradition where for the vast majority of pieces, they are out of copyright. Typically, music licensing is not dealt with directly by the game’s developer or even publisher, but through a third-party known as a Performing Rights Organisation (PRO). In the UK for instance, the two PROs are typically the Performing Rights Society (PRS) and the Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) whereas in the US, it would be (amongst many), the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) or Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI). In Japan, it is the Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers (JASRAC). That said, the biggest developer and publisher of JRPGs – Square Enix – does license its own music and for concerts, the process to apply for such a license is reasonably straightforward. In **Appendix 6.2**, the guidelines provided by Square Enix are shown. As a point of reference, this has been translated using Google Translate from the Japanese source page (Square Enix Music, 2020). This stands in stark contrast to many video game developers and publishers, particularly of CRPGs, for which there is no relatively straightforward method to licensing music for public performance for concerts. As such, the ease of licensing for JRPGs – most notably from Square Enix – could indeed be another factor as to the proliferation of JRPG music within concerts.

Yet, why are companies like Square Enix in a position that they know there is demand for music found within their JRPG titles? For that, I argue that there is one particular element found within the vast majority of JRPG cues that is not found in corresponding cues in WRPG titles – that of melody.

6.5 The Use of Melody

‘Music quickly went from being a catchy gimmick designed to sucker quarters from unsuspecting passers-by in arcades, to being an integral part of the gaming experience’ (Collins, 2005, p. 5). Therefore, in order to create this ‘catchy gimmick’, composers would create memorable melodies that would appeal to a broad array of people using many of the features listed above. With the advent Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) and many of these techniques were copied from older arcade machines. As Nathan Altice writes about Nintendo’s transference of games from arcade to console, this ‘would allow Nintendo to develop console versions of its arcade games without a massive upfront investment in research, development, and manufacturing’ (Altice, 2015, p. 13). It is not unreasonable to suggest that this also applied to music as well.

JRPGs to begin with, would subscribe to these short, memorable melodies that would fit around the hardware limitation of the time. Coupled with the length of games and the nature of *grinding*¹⁵¹ this inevitably led to a wide number of themes that being repeated all of which involving catchy melodies. For series of games like *Final Fantasy* for instance, which heavily dominates the spreadsheet, these themes can be repeated and varied accordingly. Take the theme the character of the chocobo – a yellow ostrich-like bird in the *Final Fantasy* franchise. First appearing in *Final Fantasy II* this theme originated on the NES and was just six seconds of repeated music. Variations of this have then been heard across the entire series, yet all are based around this initial short melody. This has inevitably led to generations of people hearing the same melody again and again albeit in different arrangements and additionally further cements both Kizzire, Ivănescu’s and Bongiovanni’s arguments that JRPG music builds upon nostalgia.

Returning to Collins, her paper references Andrew Boyd, composer for *The Lord of The Rings: The Two Towers* video game tie-in:

In a game, a composer (or music editor, for that matter) usually has no control over how a scene unfolds; the player controls that. There is a very basic disconnect between music and the game, each of which happen over time but according to very different internal logic. Since the goal most of the time is to give the appearance that no matter what the player does, the music is appropriately supporting the action-to make it sound as if the music was composed exactly for the situation at hand, no matter what the situation is-games have begun adopting "adaptive" music systems. This kind of system allows the game's music to be manipulated by the game itself at runtime, according to a set of rules established by the composer/editor. The big issue is managing the trade-off between moment-to-moment relevance in the soundtrack and some sense of musical integrity. It is possible to constantly switch pieces of music based on the action, but then the music will lose any sense of

¹⁵¹ Defined as ‘the repetition of an action or series of actions in a video game in order to obtain a reward’ (King, 2009) when it trying to improve a player’s avatar’s stats.

coherence, flow, and integrity. On the other hand, just letting a piece of music play without regard to the action might end up with very inappropriate music at some points (Collins, 2005, p. 17).

This runs at the heart of the argument as to a reason why the music for JRPGs is so popular within non-specific video game concerts. Whilst other ludic genres have adaptive music- allowing the music for the game adapt to what the player in the game is doing – then the music must be forever changing and be ultimately different from one play-through to the next. Adam Sporka (2015) writes in presentation for the #UXMonday event on the slide “Game Music Interactivity”:

- Static soundtrack
 - Predefined and unchanging
 - Loops
 - Assigned to specific screens/levels
- Dynamic (adaptive) soundtrack
 - More complex control of the music playback
 - Engine “aware” of the state of the game (Sporka, 2015).

There is much merit to the argument that for the vast majority of the JRPGs listed in the spreadsheet conform to the ‘static soundtrack’ that Sporka describes and has been referenced earlier. It therefore stands to reason that through this system of predefined, unchanging loops which are assigned to specific screens and levels that the melody will be heard by the player multiple times. This in turn links back to the issue of repetition stated above.

6.6 Conclusion

The original hypothesis of this chapter centred on a notion that JRPG music outnumbered all other game-styles at non-specific video game concerts and the data provided in the spreadsheet suggests this. Yet the reasons as to why are varied.

JRPGs are predominantly single player games that mainly utilise a fantastical story concerning many characters that play out over dozens of hours. Many of the series that fall under the label of a JRPG have a rich heritage spanning multiple games over several decades, often with plot devices that occur again and again; a feature fully supporting Kizzire and Ivănescu’s theories of nostalgia. Leitmotifs are used frequently to symbolise the various people, places and objects that the player will encounter throughout the play-through of the game. Coupled with the act of grinding to bolster stats, the focus on melody of the pieces of music contained within the soundtrack leads to a lot of repetition. Yet through different arrangements, these factors seem not to result in ‘repetition fatigue’ (Phillips, 2014, p. 66) but instead something that continues

to resonate in a player's mind long after the game has finished. With this in mind, the notion of video game music concerts begins to make more sense. Players spend a significant amount of time completing the average JRPG and the factors above outline why these pieces of music resonate so much with this audience.

Video game music concerts continue to evolve and are likely to do so well into the future. Encouraging more people to hear orchestral music is the goal of many although to many more it is a way of continuing to commemorate a series rich musical heritage. As Thomas Böcker states:

'All our team members love what they are doing, as clichéd as it might sound. We're always striving to produce exciting concerts that set new standards, and are constantly pushing ourselves to work harder and to learn more from the experience' (Böcker, 2016).

The 'special' category of the spreadsheet should be highlighted once more as it concerns a fundamental question. For if the linear music of main themes, credit themes and the music associated with cutscenes feature so significantly within these concerts – concerts that feature across several decades across the world – maybe fans of these games are not so much fascinated by game music per se, but instead thematic music that reminds them of the memorable interactive experiences they had whilst playing the game and the sense of nostalgia and emotional connections that they felt.

Perhaps however, there is a similar style of music that has yet to be mentioned. If we attempt to summarise video game music concerts they are:

- Melody dominated pieces
- Orchestral in nature though with added instruments, for example drum kit, electric guitar etcetera.
- Various different genres of music within the orchestral make-up
- A spectacle that people go to see and be entertained by
- Rely on nostalgia and/or familiarity
- Often incorporate suites or shorter pieces than more traditional Western Classical music
- Will either feature a compere or the conductor will present the concert

The similarity is of course obvious: light music. The main page of the Light Music Society's website states:

Light Music bridges the gap between classical and popular music, although its boundaries are often blurred. It is music with an immediate appeal, music to entertain and to enjoy. It has a strong emphasis on melody, and as such, it is designed to appeal to a wider audience than more serious forms of the Western classical music tradition (Hope, 2018).

In their 'About' section, we see further similarities. To give examples, the range of music they state that light music covers includes: operettas, waltzes, marches, symphonic jazz, arrangements of popular songs, film music, television music and more. All of these have been referenced already and do not need expanding on again, however, we can see that JRPG music in particular – when used in a concert hall setting – is simply light music.

With this penultimate chapter complete, we can now turn towards summarising everything that has been discussed thus far. In the final chapter, I present my conclusions to the question of coherence and how this has been managed across the JRPG/WRPG divide.

Appendices

- **Appendix 6.1:** Video game music concert programmes and genres of pieces chosen.
- **Appendix 6.2:** Guidelines Before Application Form for Licensing Square Enix Music for Concerts

CHAPTER 7:

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

To satisfactorily answer the question of coherence within a single-player fantasy CRPG score, requires an understanding of the two sub-genres of the computer role-playing game that dominate the market. The video game market crash of 1983 and the rise of the NES in the mid-1980s is – in my view – the cultural dividing point that has led to the split between Western and Japanese RPGs. Until then, the US was leading the way in computer game design and CRPGs were just one facet of the overall industry. Yet, after this western console crunch, the NES became the dominant platform within the industry and the most commercially successful CRPGs were being released for it such as *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy*. Conversely, the CRPGs designed in Western markets were being developed for Personal Computers and rapidly became more and more niche just as the RPGs for consoles became more popular. It would take a decade for Western RPGs to evolve out of this slump with games like *Daggerfall* and *Diablo* by which point the Japanese RPG had fully diverged from what had once been one type of game. JRPG developers had long had to look elsewhere for inspiration; turning away from the influences of Western fantasy fiction and Hollywood fantasy cinema and embracing their own cultural heritage with media products of manga and anime. Within only a few years, the quasi-medieval European worlds that *Dungeons & Dragons* had been using were at least partially expunged in favour of ever outlandish stories that mixed science and magic alike. Characters were given more depth and the art-style of the games began drawing from anime as graphical technologies improved. The ‘logical’ worlds of Western-fantasy which had been so popularised since Tolkien’s time were now being replaced by worlds that often-required suspensions of disbelief or a conscious acceptance that this fantasy is so unlike anything that had been seen before.

A fantasy CRPG has always required a narrative element to it; the music must seek to represent something fantastical, be it ethereal, demonic, angelic or magical. As such, it is no surprise that compositional-design became more fragmented as the stories of these games began to diverge. The composers of these animated films and series that had become so influential to the JRPG had by this point used a vast array of styles in their scoring, from jazz to orchestral, minimalist to rock. Mixed in with this was the established idiom of the theme song in the culturally diffused J-Pop style. For JRPGs, with their ever fantastical and oft-illogical worlds, musical cohesiveness was now no longer a necessity and it is no surprise that Uematsu’s decision to move away from the wholly traditional orchestral score occurred. To appreciate the ‘illogicality’ mentioned, consider the screenshot below in Fig. 7.1:



Fig. 7.1 – Cloud from *Final Fantasy VII* fighting Shinra Guards

The scene in the picture shows Cloud – *Final Fantasy VII*'s main protagonist – holding a sword as large as he is which is wider than his head. The logic suggests that the sword would be far too heavy to hold, let alone fight with. Yet at the same time, he is fighting two Shinra guards using machine guns. Logic dictates that Cloud would lose; but this is far from the case and this very early fight in the game is just one of many. The remake of the game replays this scene, showing that even with state-of-the-art graphics, this level of illogicality not only continues to this day, but has been fully accepted, as shown in Fig. 7.2:



Fig. 7.2 – Cloud from *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* fighting Shinra guards

Therefore, if international audiences can accept technology and magic, fantastical landscapes and power plants in one cohesive world and someone bringing a sword to a gun fight and winning, then the stylistic eclecticism and extravagance of the JRPG score is just as acceptable. As Phillips writes, 'the goal of composers will be to create music that matches the emotion of the visual aesthetic, so that the player will be able to perceive the beauty and detail of the graphics and animations' (Phillips, 2014, p. 46). As a result,

it is understandable that the outlandish visuals would give rise to the huge variety of styles and pieces that the player of JRPGs will hear.

There are of course, many other narrative differences between the two sub-categories. Perhaps the most striking can be summarised using Chatman's theory of the components of a narrative; whilst Chatman argues that a story must consist of actions, happenings, setting and characters, the majority of W RPGs only include three – unlike with JRPGs that will often include all four. Characters in W RPGs are rarely given the musical attention lavished upon them as in JRPGs – see Fig. 7.3 and 7.4.



Fig. 7.3 and 7.4 – Images of Morrigan from the W RPG series *Dragon Age* and Tifa Lockhart from the JRPG series *Final Fantasy VII*.

Despite the prominence of both characters in their respective series – Morrigan plays a major role in the first and third games of the series (*Dragon Age: Origins* and *Dragon Age: Inquisition* respectively) and Tifa plays a major role across both *Final Fantasy VII* (and its remake) and the sequel film *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children*. Yet out of the two, only Tifa has a character theme which is developed throughout the story as a leitmotif. The irony of all of this is that the emotional power of the leitmotif has been covered extensively within film music from which W RPGs have drawn so much inspiration.

As well as responding to the narrative, I have argued across this thesis that coherency also needs to respond to the various elements of the ludic-genre the game inhabits. Consequently, we perhaps see something of a convergence here between the two main sub-categories of the CRPG. What was once clearly separated between the more real-time action of the W RPG (albeit real-time with pause in Black Isle Studio/BioWare games for instance) and the turn-based JRPG, perhaps shows that the Action-RPG has become the norm with games such as *Kingdom Hearts*, *Final Fantasy XV* and *Tales of Berseria*, just as it is in *The Elder Scrolls*, *Dragon Age: Inquisition* or *Greedfall*. With this, comes musical design choices – there is no need for instance to incorporate the 'Entering Combat' stinger found in classic JRPGs if the mechanics of the

game do not pull the players into a different battle screen. That is not to say that all JRPGs are moving away from this; the second nostalgic wave seen around 2010 shows there is still a large appetite for this type of turn-based game, however, it is worthy of note.

It is at this point that we can return to Summers' idea raised in Chapter One. Within his article, Summers suggests that there are two factors that influence the music of game design; the interactive genre and the environmental genre. I would argue that in addition to these two, we must also consider the game's cultural heritage. The culture of modern Japan is absolutely fascinating and is a melting pot of ideas, beliefs and influences decades old. What is fantasy in the West has remained mainly the same in that time, but fantasy in Japan has evolved to a degree that is impossible to overstate. Yet, even whilst multiple influences affect JRPG game design, there is still an appreciation for Western fantasy as Uematsu states:

When making a fantasy world for a game, *The Lord of the Rings* or Celtic culture are the kind of themes that are common as the basis of many RPGs. So, Japanese RPGs end up being based on foreign ideas of fantasy too, and what you see in those is ultimately beautiful forests, rivers, castles, fairies and so on. So, they're quite similar to the things I loved when I was in Kochi (Uematsu, 2014).

Together, these three categories of narrative, ludic-genre and cultural heritage have been referenced throughout this thesis in order to satisfactorily answer the question of coherence within the musical score of single-player fantasy CRPGs. In addition to Suits' and Chatman's theories, Huron's writing on expectation is critical to the notion of coherency. Games are built upon what has come before – what has worked and what has not, so that all of those involved in a game's creation can work towards a product that is accepted by their audience that is more or less based on their expectations. Chapters Two and Three outline this history of expectation. However, what I feel is amongst the most important parts of my research are the new template models shown in sections 4.6 and 5.7. These shared cues – were shown to be found on average over 80% of the time in both JRPGs and WRPGs alike. No matter the twist on the narrative, the differences in battle systems or where the development team is based, it is now arguably possible to suggest that a new model for cues found in CRPGs has been found, building upon the decades old templates first heard in *Ultima III: Exodus* and *Dragon Quest*.

There is one other important piece of information that I wish to draw attention to as I begin to bring this conclusion to a close. Whilst they were mentioned in Chapter Three, throughout the analysis in Chapters Four and Five however, two notable CRPGs were not discussed: *The Witcher* series and the *Divinity: Original Sin II*. Both of these games achieved critical acclaim and both were awarded a perfect 10 on *Gamespot*, an "Essential" on *Eurogamer* and almost as highly on comparable game review sites such as *IGN*. Yet it was impossible to incorporate them into the discussion of the JRPG versus the WRPG as stylistically – and musically – these games fit neither mould. Whilst there are certainly similarities, I argue that there are

enough differences to suggest that they belong to a separate genre; perhaps something new. To suggest an entirely new genre would require more games than just these, but from a cultural, narrative and musical perspective consider the following. *The Witcher* particularly manipulates the Tolkienesque mythos that has long since dominated WRPGs to embrace the folklore of Eastern Europe. Additionally, whilst Larian Studios is Belgian, the composer is Hungarian and the game's music was recorded there. CD Projekt Red – *The Witcher's* development studio – is Polish. Their choices of instrumentation are strongly dominated by noticeably ethnic strings rather than the standard late-Romantic orchestral sonority found in WRPGs. Melodies are noticeable and not shied away from just as in JRPGs where this is demanded – as Chapter Six proves. As such, with the commercial and critical acclaim that both games have received it perhaps suggests that this might be the start of a new musical genre – and even ludic-genre – that of the Eastern European RPG.

There are of course, certain notable things that were beyond the scope of this study. Firstly, a Music Information Retrieval (MIR) analysis could be applied to the template themes proposed in the aforementioned sections 4.6 and 5.7. This tool is part of a 'highly-interdisciplinary field bridging the domains of digital audio signal processing, pattern recognition, software system design, and machine learning' (LeBeouf, 2008). It is constructed as a coded algorithm which allows a computer to "listen" and to begin to "understand and evaluate" audio data, such as MP3s or wav files in an effort to approach vast quantities of music in a way that a musicologist would listen to and analyse pieces of music. With a wide range of parameters can be "understood" in a similar way that musicians can identify elements such as key, tempo, genre, chord progressions or even formal structure. The benefits to this are enormous – vast quantities of recorded music can be analysed by the computer far faster than a human could ever hope to accomplish and as such, future work may investigate MIR tools applied over a corpus of CRPGs. Secondly, the rock music elements mentioned by Phillips (2014, p. 88) within WRPG music design should be investigated further. Thirdly, the restrictions set to narrow the focus of the study exclude many important CRPGs either due to the narrative such as science-fiction or that they may have been multiplayer for instance MMORPGs. Both of these examples deserve much further study than currently exists.

To conclude, a summary of this thesis' research contributions is useful. Chapter One outlines the literature that this thesis builds upon; particularly the theories of Chatman, Suits, Huron, Kizzire, Ivănescu, Sweeney and van Elferen. Additionally, it also introduces a comprehensive database of CRPGs between 1997 and 2013 whilst using it to enhance the validation for this thesis' existence. Chapters Two and Three details the first canonical study of music within single-player fantasy CRPGs offering a wide variety of notated examples to showcase the cultural and narrative differences in the music behind these games. A deeper discussion has then been offered in Chapters Four and Five showcasing these differences further, with particular attention on the role that the music of anime and Hollywood cinema have had upon JRPGs and WRPGs respectively. At the end of both of these chapters, a new template for cues found in both JRPGs and

WRPGs respectively is given along with quantifiable evidence for support. Finally, Chapter Six provides quantifiable evidence of the continued interest in CRPG – and particularly JRPG – scores within video game music concerts from 1991 through to 2020 and highlights the reasons behind this. With this thesis, multiple areas of CRPG music design, influence and impact have been touched upon and whilst I do not begin to suggest that this is a fully comprehensive study, there is much to be said that it builds upon the scholarship of those academics listed across this thesis and provides much more material to be built upon.

VIDEO GAMES CITED

Notes

The list provided below is in the format:

<Title of Game>

(Publisher, Developer, Original Year of Release, Format Played [Notes])

Video Games Cited

- ***Abe's Oddysee***
(GT Interactive Software, Oddworld Inhabitants, 1997, Windows [Referenced Only])
- ***Akalabeth: World of Doom***
(California Pacific Computer Co., Richard Garriott, 1979, Apple II [Emulated])
- ***Arcanum: Of Steamworks and Magick Obscura***
(Sierra On-Line, Troika Games, 2001, Windows)
- ***Baldur's Gate***
(Interplay Entertainment, BioWare/Black Isle Studios, 1998, Windows)
- ***Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn***
(Black Isle Studios/Interplay Entertainment, BioWare, 2000, Windows)
- ***Baldur's Gate III***
(Larian Studios, Larian Studios, 2020 [Early Access], Windows)
- ***Beneath Apple Manor***
(The Software Factory/Quality Software, Don Worth, 1978, Apple II [Emulated])
- ***Bioshock***
(2K Games, 2K Boston/2K Australia, 2007, Windows)
- ***Bioshock: Infinite***
(2K Games, Irrational Games, 2013, Windows)
- ***Bloodborne***
(Sony Computer Entertainment, FromSoftware, 2015, PlayStation 4)
- ***Blue Dragon***
(Microsoft Game Studios, Mistwalker/Artoon, 2006, Xbox 360)
- ***Child of Light***
(Ubisoft, Ubisoft Montreal, 2014, Windows)
- ***Chrono Trigger***
(Square, Square, 1995, Super Nintendo Entertainment System)
- ***Colossal Cave Adventure***
([No Publisher], William Crowther/Don Woods, 1976, DEC PDP-10 [Referenced Only])
- ***Cosmic Fantasy: Bōken Shōnen Yū***
(Telenet, LaserSoft, 1990, PC Engine CD [Referenced Only])
- ***Cosmic Fantasy 4***
(Telenet, LaserSoft, 1994, PC Engine CD [Referenced Only])
- ***Crypt of the NecroDancer***
(Brace Yourself Games/Klei Entertainment, Brace Yourself Games, 2015, Windows)

- ***Demon's Souls***
(Sony Computer Entertainment/Atlus USA/Namco Bandai Games, FromSoftware, 2009, PlayStation 3)
- ***Deus Ex***
(Eidos Interactive, Ion Storm, 2000, Windows)
- ***Diablo***
(Blizzard Entertainment, Davidson & Associates, 1996, Windows)
- ***Diablo II***
(Blizzard Entertainment, Blizzard North, 2000, Windows)
- ***Diablo III***
(Blizzard Entertainment, Blizzard Entertainment, 2012, Windows)
- ***Dirge of Cerberus: Final Fantasy VII***
(Square Enix, Square Enix, 2006, PlayStation 2)
- ***Disgaea: Hour of Darkness***
(Nippon Ichi Software/Atlus/Koei, Nippon Ichi Software, 2003, PlayStation 2)
- ***dnd***
(Whisenhunt/Wood, 1975, PLATO [Referenced Only])
- ***Donkey Kong***
(Nintendo, Nintendo R&D/Ikegami Tsushinki, 1981, Arcade)
- ***Doom***
(id Software, id Software, 1993, MS-DOS)
- ***Dragon-On Dragoon 2 [Drakengard 2]***
(Square Enix/Ubisoft, Cavia, 2005, PlayStation 2)
- ***Dragon Age: Inquisition***
(Electronic Arts, BioWare, 2014)
- ***Dragon Age II***
(Electronic Arts, BioWare, 2011)
- ***Dragon Age: Origins***
(Electronic Arts, BioWare, 2009, Windows)
- ***The Dragon & Princess***
(Koei, Koei, 1982, NEC PC-8801 [Emulated])
- ***Dragon Lair***
(Fugen Denshi, John Bell/Patty Bell, 1982, PC-8001 [Referenced Only])
- ***Dragon's Dogma***
(Capcom, Capcom, 2012, Windows)
- ***Dragon's Lair***
(Cinematronics, Rick Dyer/Don Bluth, 1983, LaserDisk [Referenced Only])
- ***Dragon Quest [Dragon Warrior]***
(Enix/Nintendo, Chunsoft, 1986, Nintendo Entertainment System)
- ***Dragon Slayer***
(Nihon Falcom, Nihon Falcom/Square/Epoch, 1984, PC-9801 [Emulated])
- ***Dragonstomper***
(Starpath, Starpath, 1982, Atari 2600)
- ***Dungeon***
([No Publisher], Don Daglow, 1975, PDP-10)

- ***Dungeon Master***
(FTL Games/Victor Interactive Software, FTL Games/Victor Interactive Software, 1987, Apple II GS [Emulated])
- ***Eternal Arcadia***
(Sega, Overworks, 2000, Dreamcast)
- ***EverQuest***
(Sony Online Entertainment/Ubi Soft, Verant Interactive/989 Studios, 1999, Windows)
- ***Eye of the Beholder***
(Strategic Simulations, Westwood Associates, 1991, MS-DOS)
- ***Fable***
(Microsoft Game Studios, Big Blue Box Studios, 2004, Windows)
- ***Fallout Tactics: Brotherhood of Steel***
(14 Degrees East/Bethesda Softworks, Micro Forté, 2001, Windows)
- ***Final Fantasy***
(Square/Nintendo, Square, 1987, Nintendo Entertainment System [Emulated])
- ***Final Fantasy Tactics***
(Square/Sony Computer Entertainment, Squaresoft, 1997, PlayStation [Emulated])
- ***Final Fantasy II***
(Square, Square, 1988, Famicom [Emulated])
- ***Final Fantasy III***
(Square, Square, 1990, Famicom [Emulated])
- ***Final Fantasy IV***
(Square, Square, 1991, Super Nintendo Entertainment System [Emulated])
- ***Final Fantasy IX***
(Square/Square Electronic Arts/Square Enix, Square, 2000, PlayStation)
- ***Final Fantasy V***
(Square, Square, 1993, Super Nintendo Entertainment System [Emulated])
- ***Final Fantasy VI***
(Square, Square, 1994, Super Nintendo, Entertainment System [Emulated])
- ***Final Fantasy VII***
(Square, Sony Computer Entertainment/Eidos Interactive/Square Enix, 1997, PlayStation/Windows)
- ***Final Fantasy VII: Remake***
(Square Enix, Square Enix Business Division 1, 2020, PlayStation 4)
- ***Final Fantasy VIII***
(Square, Square/Square EA/SCE Australia/Eidos Interactive/Square Enix, 1999, Windows)
- ***Final Fantasy X***
(Square/Square Electronic Arts/Sony Computer Entertainment, Squaresoft, 2001, PlayStation 2)
- ***Final Fantasy X-2***
(Square/Square Enix, Square Product Development Division 1, 2003, PlayStation 2)
- ***Final Fantasy XI***
(Sony Computer Entertainment/Square/Square Enix, Square/Square Enix, 2002, Windows)
- ***Final Fantasy XII***
(Square Enix, Square Enix, 2006, PlayStation 2)
- ***Final Fantasy XIII***
(Square Enix, Square Enix 1st Production Department, 2009, PlayStation 3/Windows)

- ***Final Fantasy XIII-2***
(Square Enix, Square Enix 1st Production Department, 2011, Windows)
- ***Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn***
(Square Enix, Square Enix Business Division 5, 2013, Windows)
- ***Final Fantasy XV***
(Square Enix, Square Enix Business Division 2, 2016, Windows)
- ***Fire Emblem: Mystery of the Emblem***
(Nintendo, Intelligent Systems, 1994, Super Famicom [Emulated])
- ***Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon and the Blade of Light***
(Nintendo, Intelligent Systems/Nintendo R&D1, 1990, Famicom [Emulated])
- ***Fire Emblem 2: The Sacred Stones***
(Nintendo, Intelligent Systems, 2004, Game Boy Advance)
- ***Gateway to Apshai***
(Epyx, The Connelley Group, 1983, Commodore 64 [Emulated])
- ***Golden Sun***
(Nintendo, Camelot Software Planning, 2001, Game Boy Advance)
- ***Golden Sun: The Lost Age***
(Nintendo, Camelot Software Planning, 2002, Game Boy Advance)
- ***Gothic***
(Egmont Interactive/THQ/Xicat Interactive, Piranha Bytes, 2001, Windows)
- ***Grandia***
(ESP Software/Sony Computer Entertainment/GungHo Online/Ubi Soft, Game Arts, 1997, PlayStation)
- ***GrimGrimoire***
(Nipon Ichi Software/NIS America/Koei, Vanillaware, 2007, PlayStation 2)
- ***Guild Wars***
(NCSOFT, ArenaNet, 2005, Windows)
- ***Guild Wars 2***
(NCSoft/ArenaNet, ArenaNet, 2012, Windows)
- ***Guitar Hero***
(RedOctane/MTV Games/Harmonix, Harmonix, 2005, PlayStation 2)
- ***Half-Life***
(Sierra Studios/Valve, Valve, 1998, Windows)
- ***Hitman: Codename 47***
(Eidos Interactive, IO Interactive, 2000, Windows)
- ***Icwind Dale***
(Interplay Entertainment/MacPlay, Black Isle Studios, 2000, Windows)
- ***Icwind Dale II***
(Interplay Entertainment, Black Isle Studios, 2002, Windows)
- ***Jade Empire***
(Microsoft Game Studios/2K Games/TransGaming/Aspyr/EA, BioWare, 2005, Windows)
- ***Just Dance***
(Ubisoft, Ubisoft Paris/Ubisoft Milan, 2009, Wii)
- ***Kingdom Hearts***
(Square/Square Electronic Arts/Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, Square, 2001, PlayStation 3 [Part of Kingdom Hearts 1.5 Collection])

- ***Kingdom Hearts II***
(Square Enix, Square Enix Product Development Division 1, 2005, PlayStation 3 [Part of Kingdom Hearts 2.5 Collection])
- ***Kingdom Hearts III***
(Square Enix, Square Enix Business Division 3, 2019, PlayStation 4)
- ***Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories***
(Square Enix, Square Enix/Jupiter, 2004, PlayStation 3 [Part of Kingdom Hearts 1.5 Collection])
- ***Koudelka***
(SNK/Infogrames, Sacnoth, 1999, PlayStation [Referenced Only])
- ***Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny***
(Virgin Interactive Entertainment/Westwood Studios, 1997, Windows)
- ***Lands of Lore: The Throne of Chaos***
(Virgins Games, Westwood Studios, 1993, DOS [Emulated])
- ***Lunar: Eternal Blue***
(Game Arts/Working Designs, Game Arts/Studio Alex, 1994, Sega CD [Emulated])
- ***Lunar: The Silver Star***
(Game Arts/Working Designs, Game Arts/Studio Alex, 1992, Sega CD [Emulated])
- ***Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga***
(Nintendo, AlphaDream, 2003, Game Boy Advance [Referenced Only])
- ***Mass Effect***
(Microsoft Game Studios/Electronic Arts, BioWare, 2007, Windows)
- ***Mass Effect 2***
(Electronic Arts, BioWare, 2010, Windows)
- ***Mass Effect 3***
(Electronic Arts, BioWare, 2012, Windows)
- ***Medal of Honor: Frontline***
(EA Games, EA Los Angeles, 2002, PlayStation 2/GameCube/Xbox [Referenced Only])
- ***Megami Ibunroku Persona [Revelations: Persona]***
(Atlus/ASCII Corporation/Atlus USA/Ghostlight, Atlus, 1996, PlayStation/Windows)
- ***Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty***
(Konami Computer Entertainment Japan, Konami, 2001, PlayStation 2 [Referenced Only])
- ***Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater***
(Konami, Konami Computer Entertainment Japan, 2004, PlayStation 2 [Referenced Only])
- ***Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots***
(Konami, Kojima Productions, 2008, PlayStation 3 [Referenced Only])
- ***Metroid***
(Nintendo, Nintendo R&D1/Intelligent Systems, 1986, Nintendo Entertainment System)
- ***Minecraft***
(Mojang Studios/Microsoft Studios/Sony Interactive Entertainment, Mojang, 2011, Windows)
- ***Missile Defense 3-D***
(Sega, Sega of America, 1987, Sega Master System [Emulated])
- ***Monster Hunter***
(Capcom, Capcom Production Studio 1, 2004, PlayStation 2)
- ***Mother***
(Nintendo, Ape, 1989, Famicom [Emulated])

- ***Mother 2 [Earthbound]***
(Nintendo, Ape/HAL Laboratory, 1994, Super Nintendo Entertainment System)
- ***MUD1***
([No Publisher], Roy Trubshaw/Richard Bartle, 1978, Platform Independent [Referenced Only])
- ***Myst***
(Brøderbund, Cyan, 1993, Mac OS/Windows)
- ***Neverwinter Nights***
(Infogrames/MacSoft, BioWare, 2002, Windows)
- ***Ni no Kuni: Dominion of the Dark Djinn***
(Level-5, Level-5, 2010, Nintendo DS)
- ***Ni no Kuni: Wrath of the White Witch***
(Namco Bandai Games/Level-5, Level-5, 2011, PlayStation 3)
- ***Ni no Kuni II: Revenant Kingdom***
(Bandai Namco Entertainment/Level-5, Level-5, 2018, PlayStation 4/Windows)
- ***Nier***
(Square Enix, Cavia, 2010, PlayStation 3)
- ***Nier: Automata***
(Square Enix, PlatinumGames, 2017, PlayStation 4/Windows)
- ***Pedit5***
([No Publisher], Rusty Rutherford, 1975, PLATO Network [Referenced Only])
- ***Planescape: Torment***
(Interplay Entertainment, Black Isle Studios, 1999, Windows)
- ***Phantasy Star***
(Sega, Sega, 1987, Master System [Emulated])
- ***Pillars of Eternity***
(Paradox Interactive, Obsidian Entertainment, 2015, Windows)
- ***Pillars of Eternity II: Deadfire***
(Versus Evil, Obsidian Entertainment, 2018, Windows)
- ***Pokémon Red and Green [and Blue]***
(Nintendo, Game Freak, 1996, Game Boy)
- ***Pokémon Yellow***
(Nintendo, Game Freak, 1998, Game Boy)
- ***Pong***
(Atari, Atari, 1972, Arcade [Referenced Only])
- ***Quake***
(GT Interactive, id Software, 1996, Windows)
- ***Radiant Historia***
(Atlus/Atlus USA/Deep Silver, Atlus/Headlock, 2010, Nintendo DS [Emulated])
- ***Rock Band***
(MTV Games, Harmonix/Pi Studios, 2007, PlayStation 3)
- ***Rogue: Exploring the Dungeons of Doom [Rogue]***
(Epyx, A.I. Design, 1980, Commodore 64 [Emulated])
- ***Secret of Evermore***
(Square/Nintendo, Squaresoft, 1995, Super Nintendo Entertainment System [Emulated])
- ***Secret of Mana***
(Square, Square, 1993, Super Nintendo Entertainment System [Emulated])

- **Shadow Hearts**
(Aruze/Midway Games, Sacnoth, 2001, PlayStation 2)
- **Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga**
(Atlus/Atlus USA/Ghostlight, Atlus, 2004, PlayStation 2)
- **Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner 2 – Raidou Kuzunoha vs. King Abaddon**
(Atlus, Atlus, 2008, PlayStation 2)
- **Shining Force**
(Sega, Climax Entertainment, Sonic! Software Planning, 1992, Mega Drive [Emulated])
- **Shovel Knight**
(Yacht Club Games, Yacht Club Games, 2014, Windows)
- **Silent Hill**
(Konami, Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo (Team Silent), 1999, PlayStation)
- **Sonic the Hedgehog**
(Sega, Sega, 1991, Mega Drive [Genesis])
- **Soulcalibur IV**
(Bandai Namco Games/Namco Bandai Games, Project Soul, 2008, PlayStation 3)
- **Space Invaders**
(Taito/Midway/Leisure & Allied Industries/Atari, Taito, 1978, Arcade [Emulated])
- **Star Ocean: Till the End of Time**
(Enix/Square Enix, tri-Ace, 2003, PlayStation 2)
- **Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic**
(LucasArts, BioWare, 2003, Windows)
- **Stonekeep**
(Interplay Productions, Interplay Productions, 1995, Windows)
- **Subarashiki Kono Sekai [The World Ends with You]**
(Square Enix, Square Enix/Jupiter, 2007, Nintendo DS [Emulated])
- **Suikoden**
(Konami, Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo, 1995, PlayStation)
- **Super Mario Bros.**
(Nintendo, Nintendo EAD, 1985, Nintendo Entertainment System)
- **Super Smash Bros.**
(Nintendo, HAL Laboratory, 1999, Nintendo 64)
- **Super Smash Bros. Melee**
(Nintendo, HAL Laboratory, 2001, GameCube)
- **Super Smash Bros. Brawl**
(Nintendo, Sora Ltd./Nintendo ad-hoc, 2008, Wii)
- **Tales of Phantasia**
(Namco/Nintendo/Namco Bandai, Wolf Team, 1995, Super Famicom [Emulated])
- **Tetris**
(Nintendo, Nintendo R&D1, 1989, Game Boy)
- **The Banner Saga**
(Versus Evil, Stoic Studio, 2014, Windows)
- **The Black Onyx**
(Bullet-Proof Software, Bullet-Proof Software, 1984, PC-8801 [Emulated])
- **The Elder Scrolls: Arena**
(Bethesda Softworks, Bethesda Softworks, 1994, MS-DOS)

- ***The Elder Scrolls II: Daggerfall***
(Bethesda Softworks, Bethesda Softworks, 1996, MS-DOS)
- ***The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind***
(Bethesda Softworks, Bethesda Game Studios, 2002, Windows)
- ***The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion***
(Bethesda Softworks, 2006)
- ***The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim***
(Bethesda Softworks/2K Games, Bethesda Game Studios, 2011, Windows)
- ***The Legend of Zelda***
(Nintendo, Nintendo EAD, 1987, Nintendo Entertainment System [Emulated])
- ***The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask***
(Nintendo, Nintendo EAD, 2000, Nintendo 64)
- ***The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time***
(Nintendo, Nintendo EAD, 1998, Nintendo 64)
- ***The Lord of The Rings: The Two Towers***
(EA Games, Stormfront Studios, 2002, PlayStation 2)
- ***The Sims***
(Electronic Arts/Aspyr Media/EA Games, Maxis/Edge of Reality, 2000, Windows)
- ***The Witcher***
(Atari/CD Projekt, CD Projekt Red, 2007, Windows)
- ***The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings***
(CD Projekt, CD Projekt Red, 2011, Windows)
- ***The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt***
(CD Projekt, CD Projekt Red, 2015, Windows)
- ***The Witcher 3: Blood and Wine [Expansion]***
(CD Projekt, CD Projekt Red, 2016, Windows)
- ***Titan Quest***
(THQ, Iron Lore Entertainment, 2006, Windows)
- ***Tomb Raider***
(Eidos Interactive, Core Design, 1996, Windows)
- ***Torchlight***
(Runic Games/Perfect Games/Encore, Inc./JoWood Entertainment/Microsoft Studios, Runic Games, 2009, Windows)
- ***Total Annihilation***
(Cavedog Entertainment/GT Interactive Software/Wargaming, Cavedog Entertainment, 1997, Windows)
- ***Trials of Mana [Seiken Densetsu 3]***
(Square, Square, 1995, Super Famicom [Emulated])
- ***Uncharted: Drake's Fortune***
(Sony Computer Entertainment, Naughty Dog, 2007, PlayStation 3)
- ***Ultima I: The First Age of Darkness***
(California Pacific Computer Co., Richard Garriott/Origin Systems, 1981, Apple II [Emulated])
- ***Ultima III: Exodus***
(Origin Systems, Origin Systems, 1983, Apple II/Commodore 64/PC-9801/Amiga [Emulated])
- ***Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar***
(Origin Systems, Origin Systems, 1985, Apple II/Commodore 64/PC-9801/Amiga [Emulated])

- ***Ultima VIII: Pagan***
(Origin Systems, Origin Systems, 1994, DOS/PC-98 [Emulated])
- ***Undertale***
(Toby Fox/8-4, Toby Fox, 2015, Windows)
- ***Valkyria Chronicles***
(Sega, Sega/Media. Vision, 2008, PlayStation 3)
- ***Vampire: The Masquerade – Bloodlines***
(Activision, Troika Games, 2004, Windows)
- ***Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos***
(Blizzard Entertainment, Blizzard Entertainment, 2002, Windows)
- ***Wild Arms***
(Sony Computer Entertainment, Media. Vision, 1996, PlayStation)
- ***Wizardry: Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord***
(Sir-Tech, Sir-Tech, 1981, Apple II/Commodore 64 [Emulated])
- ***World of Warcraft***
(Blizzard Entertainment, Blizzard Entertainment, 2004, Windows)
- ***Xenoblade Chronicles***
(Nintendo, Monolith Soft, 2010, Wii)
- ***Ys: The Vanished Omens***
(Nihon Falcom, Nihon Falcom, 1987, Famicom/Master System [Emulated])
- ***Ys II: Ancient Ys Vanished – The Final Chapter***
(Nihon Falcom, Nihon Falcom/Advance Communication Company/Mantra, 1988, Famicom/MS-DOS [Emulated])
- ***Zork***
(Personal Software/Infocom/Activision, Infocom, 1977, Apple II/Commodore 64 [Emulated])

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APPENDICES

Notes

- The following appendices are found below, numbered in the format [x.y] with x being the chapter number and y being the chronological example found within.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

- Appendix 1.1 Database of CRPGs Released Between 1997 – 2013

CHAPTER 2: A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN FANTASY CRPGS – WORKING TOWARDS COHERENCE

- Appendix 2.1 Description of a typical D&D game in 2018
- Appendix 2.2 Tracklist of the AD&D “First Quest: The Music”
- Appendix 2.3 Table of Home Video-Game Consoles by Date and Country
- Appendix 2.4 The box cover art to *Ultima III: Exodus*
- Appendix 2.5 Score for “Fear of the Heavens” from the *Secret of Mana*
- Appendix 2.6 Transcription of “Terra’s Theme” from *Final Fantasy VI*
- Appendix 2.7 Transcription of “Lonely Halls” from *Secret of Evermore*
- Appendix 2.8 Transcription of “Take Up the Cross” from *Tales of Phantasia*
- Appendix 2.9 Transcription of “Aerith’s Theme” from *Final Fantasy VII*
- Appendix 2.10 Transcription of “One Winged Angel” from *Final Fantasy VII*

CHAPTER 3: A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN FANTASY CRPGS – THE MODERN AGE

- Appendix 3.1 Proposed correct transcription of the main theme to *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*
- Appendix 3.2 Transcription of “Eora” from *Pillars of Eternity*
- Appendix 3.3 Transcription of “Aerith’s Theme – Home Again” from *Final Fantasy VII: Remake*

CHAPTER 4: MUSIC IN SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY JAPANESE RPGS

- None used.

CHAPTER 5: MUSIC IN SINGLE-PLAYER FANTASY WESTERN RPGS

- None used.

CHAPTER 6: THE ALLURE OF THE JRPG SOUNDTRACK IN VIDEO GAME MUSIC CONCERTS

- Appendix 6.1 Video Game Music Concert Programmes and Genres of Pieces Chosen
- Appendix 6.2 Guidelines Before Application Form for Licensing Square Enix Music for Concerts

Appendix 1.1.

Database of CRPGs Released Between 1997 – 2013

Appendix 1.1 - Database of CRPGs from 1997 - 2013

Game	Year	Publisher(s)	Developer(s)	Game Type(s)	Story Genre(s)	Composer(s)	Male/Female	No. of Composers	Platform(s)	No. of Platform Developed For	Series	Country of Origin
1000000	2013	EightyEight Games	EightyEight Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Matthew Klingensmith	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, iOS	4		UK
100 Rogues	2010	Fusion Reactions	Dinofarm Games	Action RPG	Fantasy				iOS, Ouya	2		USA
"Tah!" - Uncover the Evil Within	1999	HambitSoft, Inc.	HambitSoft, Inc.	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		South Korea
hack/fragment	2009	Bandai	CyberConnect2	MMORPG, Action RPG	Sci-Fi				PS2	1	hack	Japan
hack/IG U. vol. 1/Rebirth	2006	Bandai Namco Games	CyberConnect2	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Chikayo Fukuda	F	1	PS2	1	hack	Japan
hack/IG U. vol. 2/Reminisc	2006	Bandai Namco Games	CyberConnect2	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Chikayo Fukuda	F	1	PS2	1	hack	Japan
hack/IG U. vol. 3/Redemption	2007	Bandai Namco Games	CyberConnect2	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Chikayo Fukuda	F	1	PS2	1	hack	Japan
hack/Infection	2002	Bandai	CyberConnect2	Hack and Slash, RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Chikayo Fukuda	F	1	PS2	1	hack	Japan
hack/Link	2010	Bandai Namco Entertainment	CyberConnect2	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Chikayo Fukuda	F	1	PSP	1	hack	Japan
hack/Mutation	2003	Bandai	CyberConnect2	Hack and Slash, RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Chikayo Fukuda	F	1	PS2	1	hack	Japan
hack/Outbreak	2002	Bandai	CyberConnect2	Hack and Slash, RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Chikayo Fukuda	F	1	PS2	1	hack	Japan
hack/Quarantine	2003	Bandai	CyberConnect2	Hack and Slash, RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Chikayo Fukuda	F	1	PS2	1	hack	Japan
2nd Super Robot Wars Alpha	2003	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Kentaroh Haneda	M	1	PS2	1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
3079 - Block Action RPG	2011	Phr0D's Software	Phr0D's Software	Action RPG	Sci-Fi				Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	9		USA
3-Nen B-Gumi Knigachi Sensei: Demetsu no Kyoudan ni Tatsu!	2004	Chunsoft	Chunsoft, Dice Creative	Adventure, RPG	Modern				PS2	1		Japan
3D Dot Game Heroes	2010	Allux USA, SouthPeak Interactive, FromSoftware	Silicon Studio, FromSoftware	Action RPG	Fantasy	Shig Hishio, Kyoko Sato, Shochiro Sakamoto, Teruo Yamaguchi, Takahiro Iguchi, Norihito Haraizumi	M,F,M,M,M,M	6	PS3	1		Japan
3rd Super Robot Wars Alpha	2009	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi				PS2	1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
43rd	2007	Zeni Interactive	Zeni Interactive	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		Windows	1		South Korea
7 Days to Die	2013	The Fun Pimps Entertainment	The Fun Pimps	Adventure, Action RPG	Post-apocalyptic				Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, Xboxe, PS4	9		USA
7th Cavalry of molmoth	2000	Namco	Namco	RPG	Fantasy	Ōgami Masaki, Kawamoto Yoshinori	F, M	2	PS2	1		Japan
7.62 (7.26 High Calibre)	2007	1C Company	Apeiron	Tactical RPG	Modern	Kompaniya (Strategic Music)	X	1	Windows	1	Brigade E5	Russia
7th Dragon	2009	SEGA	Imageepoch	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yuuz Koshino	M	1	Nintendo DS	1	7th Dragon	Japan
7th Dragon 2020	2011	SEGA	Imageepoch	Action RPG	Post-apocalyptic	Yuuz Koshino	M	1	PSP	1	7th Dragon	Japan
7th Dragon 2020-II	2013	SEGA	Imageepoch	Action RPG	Post-apocalyptic	Yuuz Koshino	M	1	PSP	1	7th Dragon	Japan
99 Spirits	2013	Fruitbat Factory	TDRAKI	RPG	Fantasy	Yoshiyuki Ohi	M	1	Windows	1		Japan
9 Dragons	2007	GamesCampus, JoongWon Games, Run Up, Avora Interactive	JoongWon Games	MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
A Farewell to Dragons	2007	1C Company	Arise, KrasX	Action RPG	Fantasy	Vladimir Krasnokutsky, Vladimir Buinovskiy, Andrey Gladkov	M,M,M	3	Windows	1		Belarus
A Valley Without Wind	2012	Arcen Games	Arcen Games	Strategy, RPG	Post-apocalyptic	Pablo Vega	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2	A Valley Without Wind	USA
A Valley Without Wind 2	2013	Arcen Games	Arcen Games	Strategy, RPG	Post-apocalyptic	Pablo Vega	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2	A Valley Without Wind	USA
A Tale in the Desert	2003	eGenesis	eGenesis	MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy	Dave Fraser	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	9	A Tale in the Desert	USA
A Witch's Tale	2009	Nippon Ichi	Hi! Maker	Action RPG	Fantasy	Sara Salsural	F	1	Nintendo DS	1		Japan
A.I.M.: 2	2008	1C Company	SkyRiver	Action RPG	Modern	Gregory Semenov	M	1	Windows	1	A.I.M.	Russia
A.I.M.: Artificial Intelligence Machines	2004	1C Company	SkyRiver	Action RPG	Modern	Gregory Semenov	M	1	Windows	1	A.I.M.	Russia
Abaddon	2000	Gerard	iGerard	RPG	Cyberpunk, Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Gerard Prud'Homme	M	1	Windows	1	Abaddon	France
Abarenbou Princess	2001	Kadokawa Shoten ESP	Alfa System	RPG	Fantasy	Yasuko Yamada, Yoshiyuki Ishii, Yasuyuki Suzuki, Chiaki Kato	F,M,M,F	4	PS2	1		Japan
Achaea	1997	Iron Realms Entertainment	Iron Realms Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy				Browser-based	1		USA
Across Age	2010	FDG Entertainment, inbound	FDG Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy, Anime				iOS	1		Germany
AdventureQuest	2002	Artix Entertainment LLC	Artix Entertainment LLC	RPG	Fantasy				Browser-based	1		USA
AdventureQuest Worlds	2003	Artix Entertainment	Artix Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy				Browser-based	1		USA
Adventure Bar Story	2011	Rideon Inc, ZigaGame Inc, Circle Entertainment	Rideon Inc	RPG	Fantasy				3DS, PSP, Android, iOS	4		Japan
Adventures to Go	2009	Natsume, Global A Entertainment	Global A Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy				PSP	1		Japan
Aedis Eclipse: Generation of Chaos	2007	NIS America	Idea Factory	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Kenji Kameto	M	1	PSP	1	Aedis Eclipse	Japan
Age of Conan: Hyborian Adventures	2008	Funcom Oslo A/S	Eidos	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy	Knut Avenstroup Haugen	M	1	Windows	1	Age of Conan	Norway
Age of Pirates: Caribbean Tales	2005	Playlogic International N.V.	Sea Dog	Action RPG	Pirates	Yury Potemkin	M	1	Windows	1	Age of Pirates	Russia
Age of Pirates 2: City of Abandoned Ships	2009	Playlogic International N.V., 1C Company	Alakia	Action RPG	Pirates				Windows	1	Age of Pirates	Russia
Age of Wulin	2013	Snail Games, Webzen, Mental Games	Suzhou Snail	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Age of Wulin	2012	Snail Games	Snail Games	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Ahiman's Prophecy	2004	Amaranth Productions	Amaranth Productions	RPG	Fantasy	Ron Clarke, Aaron Walls, Morten Gjermundsen, Bjørn A. Lynne, Amman	M,M,M,M,F	5	Windows	1		USA
Akiba Chronicles: The First Mage	2000	THQ	H2O Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Steven Sim, Rob Plotnikoff, Max Amazon	M, M, M	3	PS4	1		Canada
AIKA Online	2009	HambitSoft, T3 Fun, Ongame	JoyImpact	MMORPG	Fantasy		X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Aion	2009	NCsoft	NCsoft	MMORPG	Fantasy	Ryo Kunihiko	M	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Aion: The Tower of Eternity	2008	NCsoft	NCsoft	MMORPG	Fantasy	InHo Joo, Ryo Kunihiko	M,M	2	Windows	1		South Korea
Alanino: Demon Hunters	2013	Spicy Horse International	Spicy Horse International	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kian How	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, Browser-based	4	Alanero	China
Alkiba's Trip	2011	Acquire	Acquire	Adventure, Action RPG	Modern, Fantasy	Toshiko Tsaki	F	1	PSP	1	Alkiba's Trip	Japan
Alkiba's Trip: Undead & Undressed	2013	Acquire, XSEED Games, NIS America	Acquire	Adventure, Action RPG	Modern, Fantasy	Toshiko Tsaki	F	1	Windows, PS3, PS4, PS Vita	4	Alkiba's Trip	Japan
Almas: Demon Spawn	1998	Lomax Software	Trigger Soft	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		South Korea
Albert Odyssey: Legend of Elden	1997	Working Designs	Sun Corporation	RPG	Fantasy	Naoki Kodaka	M	1	Saturn	1		Japan
Alchemist Marie & Elie: Futari no Atelier	2001	E3 Staff	Hearty Robin	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Akira Tsuchiya, Miyoko Kobayashi	M,F	2	Wonderswan Color	1	Atelier	Japan
Alcibar: The World of Ice	1997	Hypothermia	Hypothermia	RPG	Fantasy	Silvio Turello	M	1	DOS	1		Finland
Alfa Romeo Racing Italiano	2005	Black Bean Games	Milestone s.r.l.	Racing, RPG	Modern	Gianni Ricciardi	M	1	Windows, PS2, Xbox	3		Italy
Algonon	2009	3000AD	Quest Online	MMORPG	Fantasy	Eric Speier	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Alien Shooter: Vengeance	2006	1C Company	Sigma Team	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Alexander Shuzhkov, Nikolay Zmanovskiy, Denis Kolobayev	M,M,M	3	Windows, Mac OS X	3	Alien Shooter	Russia
All Zombies Must Die	2011	Square Enix	doubleix	Action RPG	Horror, Post-Apocalyptic	Ian Livingstone	M	1	Windows, X360, PS3	3		UK

Allods Online	2010	Mail.Ru Group, Gala Networks	Allods Team, Astrum Nival	MMORPG	Fantasy	Mark Morgan, Vladislav Ishev, Lind Enebros	M,M,M	3	Windows	1	Russia
Além no Tsubasa: Shōjin no Sora no Kanata e	1997	Right Stuff	Right Stuff	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Shinji Kawashima, Yukiko Hino, Tadashi Sawashita	M,F,M	3	PS1	1	Japan
Alpha Protocol	2010	Sega	Obsidian Entertainment	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Rod Abernethy, Jason Graves, Alexander Brandon, Dan Schneider	M,M,M,M	4	Windows, X360, PS3	3	USA
Alundra 2	2000	Activision, Sony Interactive Entertainment	Contrail, Matrix Software	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kohpei Tanaka	M	1	PS1	1	Alundra Japan
Amazing Island	2004	SEGA	Ancient Co.	Simulation, RPG	Fantasy	Yūsū Koshino, Tomonori Hayashibe, Motohiro Kawashima	M,M,M	3	Gamecube	1	Japan
Amnesia	2011	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Visual Novel, RPG	Romance	Tomomi Teratani (MANYO), Satsuki	M,F	2	PSP	1	Amnesia Japan
Amnesia Crowd	2013	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Visual Novel, RPG	Romance	Takago Azuma, rino, Hiji Anze, Tomomi Teratani (MANYO)	M,F,F,M	4	PSP	1	Amnesia Japan
Amnesia Later	2012	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Visual Novel, RPG	Romance				PSP	1	Amnesia Japan
Amnesia: Memories	2013	Idea Factory International	Idea Factory	Visual Novel, RPG	Romance	Tomomi Teratani (MANYO)	M	1	PS Vita, Windows	2	Amnesia Japan
Anulets & Armor	1997	United Software Artists	United Software Artists	Action RPG	Fantasy	Janus Anderson, Billy Fox	M,M	2	DOS	1	USA
An Elder Scrolls Legend: Battlespire	1997	Bethesda	Bethesda	RPG	Fantasy	Julian Lefay	M	1	DOS	1	Elder Scrolls USA
Anachronox	2001	Eidos Interactive	Ion Storm	RPG	Sci-Fi	Will Nevins, Darren Walsh	M,M	2	Windows	1	USA
Anarchy Online	2001	Funcom Oslo A/S	Funcom Oslo A/S	MMORPG	Sci-Fi	Björn Arne Lagim, Tor Lindeken, Morten Særlie	M,M,M	3	Windows	1	Anarchy Online Norway
Ancient Evil	1998	Silver Lightning Software	Silver Lightning Software	RPG	Fantasy	Simon Bennet	M	1	Windows, Windows Mobile	2	Australia
Ancient Evil: Curse of the Snake Cult	2001	Silver Lightning	Silver Lightning	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Ancient Evil Australia
Anearth Fantasy Stories: The First Volume	1997	Hudson Soft Company	Media Works	RPG	Fantasy	Maashiro Sayama	M	1	Saturn	1	Anearth Japan
Angel Online (Angels Love Online)	2000	Skyunion	UserJoy Technology	MMORPG	Fantasy	UserJoy	X	1	Windows	1	China
Anglique: Tenkū no Requiem	1998	NEC Home Electronics	KOEI Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Michio Fujiwara	M	1	PC-FX, PS1	2	Anglique Japan
Animorphs	2000	Ubisoft	Run and Gun!	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Randy Wilson	M	1	GBR	1	Animorphs USA
Arto: Defend a Land Enraged	2003	Anino Entertainment	Anino Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Don Billones	M	1	Windows	1	Philippines
Another War	2002	Cenega Publishing, Gathering of Developers	Allen Artefact Team, Mirage Interactive	RPG	Historical	Alojzy Brzdek		1	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Poland
Aonufen Online	2010	WISTONE Wireless Entertainment	WISTONE Wireless Entertainment	MMORPG, Action	Fantasy				iOS, Symbian	2	China
Apex Patrol	2012	Hosted Games	Allen Gier	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Sci-Fi	NO MUSIC			Android, Browser-based, iOS	2	USA
Aphelion	2010	Lunatic Studios	Lunatic Studios	RPG	Sci-Fi				X360	1	USA
Apocalypse: Desire Next	2007	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Fantasy				X360	1	Japan
Ar tonelico: Melody of Elemia	2006	NIS America	Gust Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Daisuke Achiwa, Ken Nakagawa, Akira Tsuchiya, Atsuko Shikata, Takahiro Inagaki, Haruka Shimobuchi	M,M,M,F,M,F	6	PS2	1	Ar tonelico Japan
Arxadian Warriors	2007	Sierra On-Line	Wanako Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Somazone Interactive Audio	X	1	X360	1	Chile
Arc Rise Fantasia	2010	Ignition Entertainment	Imageepoch, Marvelous Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Yasunori Mitsuada, Shunsuke Tsuchiya, Yuki Harada, Yui Makino	M,M,M,F	4	Wii	1	Japan
Arc the Lad III	1999	SCE	G-Craft	RPG	Fantasy	Maashiro Ando	M	1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	1	Arc the Lad Japan
Arc the Lad: End of Darkness	2004	Namco, Sony Computer Entertainment	Cattle Call	Action RPG	Fantasy	Takayuki Hattori, Yoko Fukushima, Koji Sakurai, Maashiro Andoh	M,F,M,M	4	PS2	1	Arc the Lad Japan
Arc the Lad: Kijin Fukkatsu	2002	Bandai	Bandai	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Hiroko Miyazawa, Haggy K, Satoru Sakamoto, Ars K	M,M,M,M	4	Wonderwan Color	1	Arc the Lad Japan
Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	2003	Sony Computer Entertainment	Cattle Call	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Maashiro Andoh, Takayuki Hattori, Yoko Fukushima, Koji Sakurai, Takashi Harada	M,M,F,M,M	5	PS2	1	Arc the Lad Japan
Arcanik: Fall of Setaril	2011	JoWood Productions, Nordic Games	Spellbound Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tilman Sillescu, Alexander Röder, Markus Schmidt, Alex Pfeiffer	M,M,M,M	4	Windows	1	Arcanik Germany
Arcanum: Of Steamworks and Magic Obscura	2001	Sierra On-Line	Troika	RPG	Steampunk, Fantasy	Ben Hooge, Kurt W. Dekker	M,M	2	Windows	1	Arcanum USA
Arcatera: The Dark Brotherhood	2000	Ubisoft	Westka Interactive	RPG	Fantasy	Werner Adelnmann	M	1	Windows	1	Arcatera Germany
ArcheAge	2013	Tencent, Trion Worlds, Mail.Ru	XL Games	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1	South Korea
Archlord	2009	Weaben, Codemasters	NNN Corporation, Codemasters Online Gaming	MMORPG	Fantasy	Jae-hwan Jung	M	1	Windows	1	Archlord South Korea
Archlord 2	2013	Weaben	Weaben	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1	Archlord South Korea
Argentum Online	2001	Noland Studios	Noland Studios	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Argentina
Arle no Bôten: Mahô no Jewel	2000	Compile	Compile	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Sinewave Japan, Kô Hayashi, Osamu Ishikawa, Satoshi Shimazaki	X,M, M, M	4	GBR	1	Japan
Armies of Exigo	2004	EA	Black Hole Entertainment	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule	M	1	Windows	1	Hungary
Ars Fatalis	2002	JoWood Productions, DreamCatcher Interactive	Arkane Studios, Wizarbox	RPG	Fantasy	Simon Amaraigham	M	1	Windows, Xbox	2	France
Assassins to the Throne	2012	1C Company	DVS	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Alexander Falinskiy, Victor Krasnolutsky	M,M	2	Windows	1	Ukraine
Aude Global (Aude 2)	2011	GameGame	GameGame	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1	South Korea
Asagath: The Distortion Testament	1998	Zone	Zone	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Asagath Japan
ASH: Archaic Sealed Heat	2007	Nintendo	Mistwalker, Raijin	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Sakimoto, Masaharu Iwata, Isao Kasa	M,M,M	3	Nintendo DS	1	Japan
Ashen Engines	2002	Pixel Mine, Iron Will Games, Asylumsoft, TKO Games	TKO Software	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	USA
Asheron's Call	1999	Microsoft, Turbine, Warner Bros	Turbine Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Asheron's Call USA
Asheron's Call 2: Fallen Kings	2000	Microsoft, Turbine, Warner Bros Interactive	Turbine	MMORPG	Fantasy	Jason Booth, Geoff Scott, Altitude Music, Sonic Implants	M,M,X,X	4	Windows	1	Asheron's Call USA
Astoria 3	2002	Intent Software GmbH & Co. KG	Intent Software GmbH & Co. KG	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Astoria Germany
Ashtoritha Story	2002	Game Park	Somnori Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy				GP32, PSP	2	South Korea
Astral Tournament	2002	Agus Software	Agus Software	Card-based RPG	Fantasy	Konstantin Elgazin, Lubava Polakova	M,M	2	Windows	1	Belarus
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist of Dusk	2012	Tecmo Koei	Gust Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Daisuke Achiwa	M	1	PS3	1	Japan
Atelier Elie: Salburg no Renkinjutsushi 2 (Atelier Elie: The Alchemist of Salburg 2)	1998	Gust Co.	Gust Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Akira Tsuchiya, Toshiharu Yamashita, Daisuke Achiwa	M,M,M	3	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4	Atelier Japan
Atelier Escha & Logy: Alchemists of the Dusk Sky	2013	Tecmo Koei		RPG	Fantasy	Yû Shimizu, Hayato Asano, Yûdôaki Kinoshita, Daisuke Achiwa, Kazuh Yanagawa, Hiroshi Kikuta, Shade, Ryudai Abe, Yui	M,M,M,M,M,M,M,M	9	PS3, PS Vita	2	Atelier Japan
Atelier Iris 2: The Azoth of Destiny	2005	Gust, Nippon Ichi, Koei	Gust	RPG	Fantasy	Daisuke Achiwa, Ken Nakagawa	M,M	2	PS2	1	Atelier Japan
Atelier Iris 3: Grand Fantasm	2006	Gust, Nippon Ichi, Koei	Gust	RPG	Fantasy	Ken Nakagawa	M	1	PS2	1	Atelier Japan
Atelier Iris: Eternal Mana	2004	Gust, Nippon Ichi, Koei	Gust	RPG	Fantasy	Daisuke Achiwa, Ken Nakagawa, Akira Tsuchiya	M,M,M	3	PS2	1	Atelier Japan
Atelier Lili: The Alchemist of Gramnad	2002	Gust	Gust	RPG	Fantasy	Daisuke Achiwa, Masayuki Kobayashi, Miyoko Kobayashi, Tsuchiya Akira	M,M,F,M	4	PS2	1	Atelier Japan
Atelier Lili: The Alchemist of Salburg 3	2001	Gust	Gust	RPG	Fantasy	Akira Tsuchiya, Miyoko Kobayashi	M,F	2	PS2	1	Atelier Japan
Atelier Marie, Elie and Anise	2001	E3 Staff	Hearty Robin	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Akira Tsuchiya, Miyoko Kobayashi	M,F	2	Wonderwan Color	1	Atelier Japan
Atelier Marie: Salburg no Renkinjutsushi	1997	imadō	Gust Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Toshiharu Yamashita, Daisuke Achiwa	M,M	2	Saturn, PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	5	Atelier Japan
Atelier Rozam: The Apprentice of Arland	2011	Gust, NIS America	Gust	RPG	Fantasy	Yamamoto Mineko	M	1	PS3	1	Atelier Japan
Atelier Totot: The Adventurer of Arland	2010	NIS America	Gust Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Ken Nakagawa, Kazuki Yanagawa	M,M	2	PS3	1	Atelier Japan

Atelier Viorator: The Alchemist of Gramad 2	2003	Gust	Gust	RPG	Fantasy	Ken Nakagawa, Daisuke Achiwa, Akira Tsuchiya, Miyoko Kobayashi, Kazuki Yanagawa	M,M,M,F,M	5	PS2	3	Atelier	Japan
Atlantica Online	2008	Ndoors Interactive	Ndoors Interactive	MMORPG	Fantasy	Minho Jang	M	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Auto Assault	2006	Ncsoft	Netdevill	MMORPG, Racing, Action	Post-Apocalyptic, Sci-Fi	Richard Dekkard	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Avadon: The Black Fortress	2011	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy				Mac OS X, Windows, Linux, Android, OnLive	5	Avadon	USA
Avalon Code	2009	Marvelous Interactive Inc., XSEED Games	Matrix Software	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Minako Adachi	F	1	Nintendo DS	1		Japan
Avatron	2000	Zone	Zone	RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows	1		Japan
Avacast: Rise of the Mage	2007	Lighthouse Interactive	ClockStone	Action RPG	Fantasy	Maximilian Stroka, Lder Lindau	M,M	2	Windows	1		Austria
Avernum	2000	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy	Jeff Vogel, Benjamin Young	M,M	2	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Avernum	USA
Avernum 2	2000	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy	Jeff Vogel, Benjamin Young	M,M	2	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Avernum	USA
Avernum 3	2002	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy	Jeff Vogel, Benjamin Young	M,M	2	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Avernum	USA
Avernum 4	2005	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy	Bjorn A. Lynne	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Avernum	USA
Avernum 5	2008	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy	Adam Skonega	M	1	Mac OS X, Windows	2	Avernum	USA
Avernum 6	2009	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy				Windows, Mac OS X, Android, iOS	4	Avernum	USA
Avernum: Escape from the Pit	2011	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy	Pierre Gernig Langer	M	1	Mac OS X, Windows, Linux, Android	4	Avernum	USA
Aveyond	2006	Amaranth	Amaranth	RPG	Fantasy	Aaron Walz	M	1	Windows	1	Aveyond	USA
Actaka	2009	Chirmis Inc.	Chirmis Inc.	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows, Mac OS X	2		Canada
Akane Dreams	1997	Konami	KCE Tokyo	RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Tamawari	M	1	GB, PS1	2		Japan
Azure Dreams	2000	Konami	KCE Tokyo	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Hiroshi Tamawari	M	1	PS1, GBC	2		Japan
Baldur's Gate	1998	Interplay Productions	Bloware	RPG	Fantasy	Michael Hoening	M	1	Windows, Macintosh	2	D&D	Canada
Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn	2000	Interplay	Bloware, Black Isle	RPG	Fantasy	Michael Hoening	M	1	Windows	1	D&D	Canada
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	2001	Black Isle Studios	Snowblind Studios, High Voltage Software	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule, Will Loconto	M,M	2	PS2, Xbox, Gamecube	3	D&D	USA
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	2004	Interplay	Black Isle Studios	Hack and Slash, Action RPG	Fantasy	Craig Stuart Garfinkle, Jeremy Soule	M,M	2	PS2, Xbox	2	D&D	USA
Barley, Shut Up and Jam: Gaiden - Chapter 1 of the Hoop:Barley Saga	2008	Tales of Game's Studios	Tales of Game's Studios	Sports, RPG	Cyberpunk, Post-Apocalyptic				Windows	1		Japan
Baroque	2007	Slng	Slng	Action RPG	Horror, Post-Apocalyptic	Masaharu Iwata	M	1	PS2, Wii, PSN	2		Japan
Bastion	2011	Warner Bros. Interactive	Supergiant Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Darren Korb	M	1	Windows, X360	2		USA
Baten Kalos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean	2003	Namco	tri-Crescendo, Monolith	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	Gamecube	1	Baten Kalos	Japan
Baten Kalos: Origins	2006	Nintendo	tri-Crescendo, Monolith	Card-based RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	Gamecube	1	Baten Kalos	Japan
Battle Fantasia	2009	Arc System Works, Akira Games, SFS Games	Arc System Works	Fighting, RPG	Fantasy	Kenosuke Sumura	M	1	Arcade, PS3, X360	3		Japan
Battle Hunter	1999	A1 Games	Succes	Tactical RPG, Card Based	Sci-Fi	Minako Taga, Tetsur Sat	F,M	2	PS1	1		Japan
Battle Mages	2003	Buka Entertainment	Targem Games	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Anton Popov	M	1	Windows	1		Russia
Battle Moon Wars 1	2005	Werk	Werk	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	DEKU, Yuki Matsuba, Atsushi Haneoka	T,F,M	3	Windows	1	Battle Moon Wars	Japan
Battle Moon Wars 2	2006	Werk	Werk	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Yuki Matsuba	F	1	Windows	2	Battle Moon Wars	Japan
Battle Moon Wars 3	2007	Werk	Werk	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Yuki Matsuba	F	1	Windows	1	Battle Moon Wars	Japan
Battle of Sunrise	2008	Sunrise Interactive	Sunrise	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Mazaya Tamaki, Nobuaki Kanehara, Souichi Sakura, Akira Oshimura, Hirohiko Fujii	M,M,F,M,M	5	PS2	1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Battle of the Yousaias	2000	Team DarkLand	Team DarkLand	Tactical RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows	2		USA
BattlePets	2000	Aggressive Game Designs	Aggressive Game Designs	Monster Raising, RPG	Fantasy	Thom Robertson	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Bawang Bie Ji	2000	Zhenggu Software	Zhenggu Software	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Basoska of the Red Dragon	1997	TBG Software	Pottware	RPG	Fantasy				DOS	1		USA
Before the Echo	2011	Iridium Studios	Iridium Studios	Music, RPG	Fantasy	Konrad Jankovics, Michael Wade Hamilton, ttp://www.konrad.com, Bradley Burr, Geoff Bisente	M,M,7,M,M	5	Windows, X360	2		USA
Beta Bloc	2007	d3 Publisher	Tamsoft	Action RPG	Fantasy				PSP	1		Japan
Betrayal in Antara	1997	Sierra On-Line	Sierra On-Line	RPG	Fantasy	David Henry	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Beyond Divinity	2004	Ubisoft, Hip, Digital Jesters	Larian Park	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kirill Polozovsky	M	1	Windows	2	Divinity	Germany
Bloodie City	2008	FinalMotive	FinalMotive	MMORPG	Post-Apocalyptic				Browser-based	1		USA
Black & White	2001	EA	Lionhead Studios	RPG, Simulation, Strategy	Fantasy	Russell Shaw	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Black & White	UK
Black Black	2002	Capcom	Capcom	RPG	Fantasy				GBA	1		Japan
Black Rock Shooter: The Game	2011	NIS America	Imageepoch	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Manabu Namiki	M	1	PSP	1		Japan
Black Sigil: Blade of the Exiled	2009	Graffiti Entertainment	Studio Anichcraft	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Jan Morgenstern, Wavemage Music Production	M,X	2	Nintendo DS	1		Canada
Black Stone: Magic & Steel	2003	Kicat Interactive, THQ, Idea Factory	KPEC Entertainment	Hack and Slash, Action RPG	Fantasy	Toru Kobayashi, Eric Ryder	M,M	2	Xbox	1		USA
Black/Matrix	1998	NEC Interchannel	Flight-Plan	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Katsunari Kitajima, Hiroshi Taniguchi, Atsushi Tojima, Makoto Katsuma	M,M,M,M	4	Saturn	1		Japan
Black/Matrix II	2002	NEC	Flight-Plan	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Taniguchi, Makoto Katsuma	M,M	2	PS2	1	Black/Matrix	Japan
Black/Matrix Zero	2002	NEC	Flight-Plan	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	AZ Game	X	1	GBA	1	Black/Matrix	Japan
Blade & Soul	2012	Ncsoft	Team Bloodlust	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Blade & Sword	2002	Whiptail Interactive	Boya Studio, Pixel Studio Co.	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Blade & Sword 2 (Dao Jian Feng Mo Lu 2)	2003	Centent Interactive Co.	Pixel Studio Co.	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Blade Dancer: Lineage of Light	2006	Sony Computer Entertainment, Nippon Ichi, Atari	Hitmaker	RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Nishino, Hijiri Anze	M,F	2	PSP	1		Japan
Blades of Avernum	2004	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy	Jeff Vogel	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Avernum	USA
Blades of Exile	1997	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy				Windows, Macintosh	2	Exile	USA
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	2007	KOEI Corporation	Omega Force	Strategy, Action RPG	Historical, War	Jamie Christopherson	M	1	PS3, X360	2		Japan
Blaze & Blade: Eternal Quest	1998	T&E Soft	T&E Soft	Action RPG	Fantasy	Ken Kojima	M	1	Windows, PS1	2		Japan
Blazing Souls (Absolute: Blazing Infinity)	2006	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Kaneko	M	1	PS2	2	Spectral Souls	Japan
Blood Knights	2013	Kalypso Media Digital	Deck 13 Interactive	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows, X360, PS3	3		Germany
Blood of the Zombies	2012	Tin Man Games	Tin Man Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Horror	NO MUSIC			Android, iOS	2		Australia
Blood Zero	2003	Totally Screwed Software	Totally Screwed Software	Action RPG	Survival Horror	James Silva	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Blue Dragon	2006	Microsoft	Mistwalker, Artoon	RPG	Fantasy	Nobuo Uematsu	M	1	X360	4		Japan
Blue Wing Blitz	2001	Square	Square	Tactical RPG	Modern, Fantasy	Kumi Tanaka	F	1	Wonderswan Color	1		Japan

Bolting Point: Road to Hell	2005	Atari	Deep Shadows	Racing, RPG	Modern	Frischer Fisch Vermittlung	X	1	Windows	1		Ukraine
Boktai 2: Solar Boy Django	2004	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Fantasy	Norihiko Hibino, Shuichi Kobori, Masashi Watanabe, Kazuki Muraoka, Aehiro Honda, Waichiro Ozaki, Nobuko Toda	M,M,M,M,M,M,F	7	GBA	1	Boktai	Japan
Boktai 3: Sabata's Counterattack	2005	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kazuki Muraoka, Masashi Watanabe, Norihiko Hibino, Shuichi Kobori	M,M,M,M	4	GBA	1	Boktai	Japan
Boktai: The Sun is in Your Hand	2003	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kazuki Muraoka, Masashi Watanabe, Norihiko Hibino, Shuichi Kobori	M,M,M,M	4	GBA	1	Boktai	Japan
Bokujō Monogatari: Harvest Moon for Girl	2000	Victor Interactive	Victor Interactive	Tactical RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Miyuki Homareda	M	1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4		Japan
Bombberman Quest	1998	Electro Brain	Hudson Soft Company	Action RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Shigeaki Irie, Mitsui Aso, Keiji Ueki, Gorō Takahashi, Norihiko Togashi, Ayako Uno	M,F,M,M,M,F	6	GBC	1	Bombberman	Japan
Bombberman Wars	1998	Hudson Soft Company	Metro Corporation	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	June Chikuma (Famishin), Takuya Nishikawa	F,M	2	Saturn, PS1	2	Bombberman	Japan
Bookworm Adventures	2006	PopCap Games	PopCap Games	RPG	Education	Reflexive Audio	X	1	Windows	1	Bookworm Adventures	Canada
Bookworm Adventures Volume 2	2009	PopCap Games	PopCap Games	RPG	Education	Staffan Melin	M	1	Windows	1	Bookworm Adventures	Canada
Bootleggers	2003	Bootleggers	Bootleggers	MMORPG	Historical, Crime				Browser-based	1		USA
Borderlands	2010	2K Games	Gearbox Software	FPS, Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Sacha Dikiciyan, Cris Velasco, Jesper Kyd, Raison Varner	M,M,M,M	4	Windows, X360, PS3	3	Borderlands	USA
Borderlands 2	2012	2K Games	Gearbox Software	FPS, Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Raison Varner, Sacha Dikiciyan, Cris Velasco, Jesper Kyd, Kevin Riepl	M,M,M,M,M	5	X360, PS3	15	Borderlands	USA
Boundary Gate: Daughter of Kingdom	1997	NEC Home Electronics	Pack-In-Video, Polestar Co, Studio OX	RPG	Fantasy	Shinichirō Satō	M	1	PC FX, PS1	2		Japan
Bounty Bay Online	2008	Frogster Interactive Pictures, YUSHO GmbH	Suzhou Snail Electronic Co.	MMORPG, Strategy	Historical, Pirates	Ting Lei, Shuan Li, Lubing Shen	F,F,?	3	Windows	1		China
Bounty Hounds Online	2011	InnoGames, Suba Games	Rpec Entertainment	MMORPG	Sci-Fi				Windows	1	Bounty Hounds	China
Brandish	1998	Nihon Falcom	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Herumi Matsuzaki, Atsushi Shirakawa, Masaru Nakajima, Satoru Arai, Hayato Sonoda, Kaname Ohara, Hirokazu Matsumura	M,M,M,M,M,F,M	7	Windows	1	Brandish	Japan
Brandish: The Dark Revenant	2009	Xseed Games	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Falcom Sound Team JDX, Atsushi Shirakawa (Temmon), Mikiyo Ishikawa	X,M,F	3	PSP	1		Japan
Brave Fencer Musashi	1998	Square	Square	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tsuyoshi Sekito	M	1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4		Japan
Brave Probe	1998	Data West	Data West	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Kojima	M	1	PS1	1		Japan
Brave Saga II	1998	Takeda	Takeda	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Yoshiro Kuwahara, Eiji Yamada, Daisuke Tamura	M,M,M	3	PS1	1	Brave	Japan
Brave Soul	2003	Peach Press	Crowd	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		Japan
Brave Story: New Traveler	2007	XSEED Games	Game Republic Inc.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Manase Kawasaki, Minalco Seki	M,F	2	PSP	1		Japan
Braheheart	2011	Galjin Entertainment	Galjin Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy				iOS	1		Russia
Breath of Death VII: The Beginning	2010	Zboyd Games	Zboyd Games	RPG	Anime, Fantasy, Post-Apocalyptic	Ronald Strauss, Gordon McNeil, John Ournski, James Ghosh	M,M,M,M	4	Windows, X360	2		USA
Breath of Fire III	1997	Capcom	Capcom	RPG	Fantasy	Akari Kaide, Yoshino Aoki	F,F	2	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4	Breath of Fire	Japan
Breath of Fire IV	2000	Capcom, SourceNext	Capcom	RPG	Fantasy	Yoshino Aoki	F	1	PS1, Windows	2	Breath of Fire	Japan
Breath of Fire V: Dragon Quarter	2000	Capcom	Capcom Production Studio 1	RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Sakamoto	M	1	PS2	1	Breath of Fire	Japan
Brigade ES: New Jagged Union	2005	1C Company, Strategy First	Agrion	Tactical RPG	Modern	Alexei Yakovlev, Evgeniy Belov	M,M	2	Windows	1		Russia
Brigandine: The Legend of Forsena	1998	Allus	Hearty Robin	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Yumiko Mori, Atsushi Naguchi, Yusuke Yada	F,M,M	3	PS1	1		Japan
Brushish Mine	2000	Illusion	Illusion	RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi				Windows	1		Japan
Bungmyeong	1997	Woongjin Media	FEW	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Butōi Seiryōden: Futari no Yūsha	1997	T&E Soft	Game Freak	RPG	Fantasy	Junichi Masuda	M	1	SNES	1		Japan
Cabal Online	2005	ESTsoft, AsiaSoft, e-Games, U1	ESTsoft	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1	Cabal	South Korea
Cain in the 3rd Earth	1998	Spin	Makkyo Entertainment Co	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi				Windows	1		South Korea
Car Battler Joe	2003	Natsume	Ancient Co.	Racing, Action, RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Yūki Koshino, Tomonori Hayashibe	M,M	2	GBA, Wii U	2		Japan
Card of Destiny: Hikari to Yami no Tougoumon	2002	Abel	Abel	RPG	Fantasy	Shūji Eggers	M	1	Dreamcast	1		Japan
Castle Crashers	2010	The Behemoth, Microsoft Game Studios, Sony Computer Entertainment	The Behemoth	Beat 'em up, Action, RPG	Fantasy	David O'S, SGLUK BOB, WATERHORN, LYDRIK, SHAYK, PEIRING KASER, JERIMAN BRUNO, HELIX, IAN SLIDER, WILL STAMPER	M,M,M,M,M,M,M,M,M	10	Windows, Mac OS X, X360, PS3	4		USA
Castle Fantasia	1998	Studio Ego	Studio Ego	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Tomoko Kasahara	F	1	Windows, Dreamcast	2	Castle Fantasia	Japan
Castle Fantasia 2: Seimaden	1999	Studio Ego	Studio Ego	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Tomoko Kasahara (PROM-AKI)	F	1	Windows	1	Castle Fantasia	Japan
Castle Fantasia: Elenshia Senki	2005	Kadowaka Shoten	Studio Ego	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	HEROICAN YOSHINOBU, YOSHINAKU NAKAI, SEIJI HIRABAYASHI, NAKA-TE, MASASHIRO KAJIHARA, Naoto Ishikawa, Miwacho Fujimura	M,M,M,?,M,M,F	7	PS2	1	Castle Fantasia	Japan
Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow	2003	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Fantasy	Michiru Yamane, Takashi Yoshida, Soshiro Hokkai	F,M,M	3	GBA	1	Castlevania	Japan
Castlevania: Curse of Darkness	2005	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Fantasy	Michiru Yamane	F	1	PS2, Xbox	2	Castlevania	Japan
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow	2005	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Fantasy	Michiru Yamane	F	1	Nintendo DS, 3DS	2	Castlevania	Japan
Castlevania: Harmony of Despair	2010	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yasuhiko Ichihashi, Tomoaki Hirono	M,M	2	X360, PS3	2	Castlevania	Japan
Castlevania: Order of Ecclesia	2008	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy, Horror	Michiru Yamane, Yasuhiko Ichihashi	F,M	2	Nintendo DS	1	Castlevania	Japan
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night	1997	Konami	KCE Tokyo	Action RPG	Fantasy, Horror	Michiru Yamane	F	1	SNES, X360, PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	6	Castlevania	Japan
Celtic Kings: Rage of War	2000	Strategy First Inc.	Haemimont Games AD	RPG, Strategy	Fantasy	Alexander Todorov, Studio 33	M,X	2	Windows, Mac OS X	2		Bulgaria
Champions of Norrath	2004	Sony Online Entertainment	Snowblind Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Inon Zur	M	1	PS2	1	Everquest	USA
Champions Online	2009	Atari	Cryptic Studios	MMORPG	Superheroes	Kevin Manthel	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Champions: Return to Arms	2005	Sony Computer Entertainment	Snowblind Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Inon Zur	M	1	PS2	1	Everquest	USA
Chantelise - A Tale of Two Sisters	2011	EasyGameStation	EasyGameStation	Action RPG	Fantasy	Arabear, ni_ya, m_box	?,M,X	3	Windows	1		Japan
Chaos Rings	2013	Square Enix	Media Vision Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Noriyasu Agematsu	M	1	Android, iOS, Windows Phone	3		Japan
Chaos Wars	2006	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Kaneko	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Children of Mana	2006	Square Enix, Nintendo	Nex	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Ito, Masaharu Iwata, Takayuki Aihara	M,M,M	3	Nintendo DS	1	Mana	Japan
Chō Aniki: Ōtoko no Tamashida	2000	Bandai	C.P. Brain	RPG, Card-based	Modern	Koji Hayama, Shigeki Hayashi	M, M	2	WonderSwan	1	Cho Aniki	Japan
Chocobo no Fushigi na Dungeon	1997	Square	Square	RPG	Fantasy	Maasahi Hamauzu	M	1	PS Vita	1	Final Fantasy	Japan
Chocobo's Dungeon 2	1998	Square	Square	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Ito, Yasuhiro Kawakami, Tsuyoshi Sekito, Kumi Tanioka	M,M,M,F	4	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4	Final Fantasy	Japan
Cho-Hatsumei Boy Kanipan: Bousou Robot no Nasol	1999	SEGA	SEGA	RPG	Sci-Fi				Dreamcast	1	Hatsumei Boy Kanipan	Japan
Choice of Broadbides	2010	Choice of Games	Choice of Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Historical, Naval	NO MUSIC			Android, Browser-based, Kindle Classic, iOS, web OS	1	Choice of	USA
Choice of Intrigues	2011	Choice of Games	Choice of Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	NO MUSIC			Android, Browser-based, iOS	3	Choice of	USA
Choice of Kung Fu	2013	Choice of Games	Choice of Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Historical, Oriental	NO MUSIC			Android, Kindle, iOS, Mac OS X	4	Choice of	USA
Choice of Romance	2010	Choice of Games	Choice of Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Historical, Fantasy	NO MUSIC			Android, Browser-based, iOS, web OS	4	Choice of	USA

Darball Senki Bakū Boost	2012	Level-5 Inc.	Level-5 Inc.	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi			3DS	1		Japan
Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair	2012	Spike Chunsoft, NIS America	Spike Chunsoft	Adventure, Visual Novel, Tactical RPG	Modern	Masafumi Takada	M	1 PSP, PS Vita	2	Danganronpa	Japan
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	2010	Spike, Spike Chunsoft, NIS America	Spike, Spike Chunsoft	Adventure, Visual Novel, Tactical RPG	Modern	Masafumi Takada	M	1 PSP, PS Vita, iOS, Android	4	Danganronpa	Japan
Dangerous High School Girls in Trouble!	2009	Mouseschief	Mouseschief	Strategy, Adventure, RPG	Modern, Mystery	Leif Shackelford	F	1 Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Dark Age of Camelot	2002	Abandon Entertainment, Vivendi	Mythic Entertainment	MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy	Rik W. Schaffer, Charles Washington, Matthew Brown, Andy Armer	M,M,M,M	4 Windows	2	Dark Age of Camelot	USA
Dark Ages	1999	Nexon	Nexon, KRU Interactive	MMORPG	Fantasy			Windows	1		South Korea
Dark and Light	2006	Farlan Entertainment	NP Cube SAIL	MMORPG	Fantasy			Windows	1		Reunion Island
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	2001	Metro3D	Metro3D Digital	Action RPG	Fantasy			PS2	1		USA
Dark Arms: Beast Buster 1999	1999	SNK	Noise Factory	Action RPG	Horror	Toshihiko Tanaka		1 Neo Geo Pocket Color	2	Dark Arms	Japan
Dark Chronicle (Dark Cloud 2)	2002	Sony Computer Entertainment	Level-5	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tomohito Nishihara	M	1 PS2, Dreamcast	2	Dark Cloud	Japan
Dark Cloud	2000	Sony Computer Entertainment	Level-5	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tomohito Nishihara	M	1 PS2	1	Dark Cloud	Japan
Dark Disciples	2004	DodgySoft	DodgySoft	RPG	Fantasy	Björn A. Lynne	M	1 Windows	1	Dark Disciples	USA
Dark Law: Meaning of Death	1997	ASCII Corp	Sakata SAS Co	RPG	Fantasy	Satoshi Nagano, Michihiko Shichi	M,M	2 SNES	1		Japan
Dark Messiah: Might and Magic	2006	Ubisoft	Arkane Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Sascha Dikicijan, Cris Velasco	M,M	2 Windows	1	Might and Magic	France
Dark Souls	2011	Namco Bandai	From Software	Action RPG	Horror, Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1 Windows, X360, PS3	3	Souls	Japan
Darkeden	1997	SOFTON Entertainment	SOFTON Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy, Horror			Windows	1		Thailand
Darkfall	2009	Audiovisual Enterprises	Aventurine	MMORPG	Fantasy	Varian Apergis	M	1 Windows	1	Darkfall	Greece
Darkfall: Unholy Wars	2013	Aventurine	Aventurine SA	MMORPG	Fantasy			Windows	1	Darkfall	Greece
Darklanders II	2012	THQ	Vigil Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jesper Kyd	M	1 Windows, X360, PS3	3		USA
Darkspore	2011	EA	Maxis Software	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Tom Holkenborg	M	1 Windows	1		USA
Darkestone	1999	Gathering	Delphine Software International	RPG	Fantasy	Christophe Rime	M	1 Windows, PS1, Android, iOS	4		France
Darkestone: Necromina	1998	Motelsoft GmbH	Motelsoft GmbH	RPG	Fantasy	Harald Breitmaler	M	1 Windows	1	Darkestone	Germany
Darkestwind: War on Wheels	2007	Psychic Software	Psychic Software	MMORPG, Racing, Action, Strategy	Post-Apocalyptic	Dean Garcia, Statyk	M,M	2 Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Das Schwarze Auge: Drakensang - Verschönerung in Ferdek	2008	Chromatrix GmbH	Chromatrix GmbH	RPG	Fantasy			Browser-based	1	Das Schwarze Auge	Germany
Dawn of Magic	2005	1C Company, Deep Silver	SkyFallen	Action RPG	Fantasy	Trilokm Productions, The Sands	X,X	2 Windows	1	Dawn of Magic	Russia
Dawn of Magic 2 (Time of Shadows)	2006	1C Company, Take-Two Interactive, Kalypso Media	SkyFallen Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Trilokm Productions, The Sands	X,X	2 Windows	1	Dawn of Magic	Russia
Dawngrip: Prelude	2006	DreamCatcher Interactive	Silent Grove Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jonathan Croftard	M	1 Windows	1		Sweden
Day Watch	2007	ND Games	Nival, Inc.	RPG, Strategy	Fantasy			Windows	1	Night Watch	Russia
DC Universe Online	2011	Daybreak Game Company	Daybreak Game Company	MMORPG	Superheroes	Gerard Marino, Chad Mossholder	M,M	2 Windows, PS3, PS4	3		USA
Dead Island	2011	Deep Silver	Techland	Action RPG	Horror	Paweł Błyszczak	M	1 Windows, X360, PS3	3	Dead Island	Poland
DeathSpank	2010	EA	Hothead Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jeff Tymoschuk	M	1 Windows, Mac OS X, X360, PS3	4	DeathSpank	Canada
DeathSpank: Thongs of Virtue	2010	EA	Hothead Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jeff Tymoschuk	M	1 Windows, Mac OS X, X360, PS3	4	DeathSpank	Canada
Deception III: Dark Delusion	1999	Temco	Temco	Tactical RPG	Horror	Sugito Miyashiro, Masaaki Udagawa, Saki Ishii, Ayako Toyoda, Takayasu Sodekoku, Susumu Fujii	M,M,M,M,M,M	6 PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4	Deception	Japan
Deep Labyrinth	2006	Atlus	Interactive Brains	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Yasunori Mitouda	M	1 Nintendo DS	1		Japan
Defiance	2013	Trion Worlds	Trion Worlds, Human Head Studios	Action, MMORPG	Post-apocalyptic, Sci-Fi	Bear McCreary	M	1 Windows, X360, PS3	3	Defiance	USA
Dekaron	2004	Nexon EU	Game-HI	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1 Windows	1		South Korea
Deltora Quest	2007	Bandai Namco	Bandai Namco	Action RPG	Fantasy	HEDGEON Sakimoto, Kimihuro Abe, Noriyuki Kankura, Masaharu Iwata, Mitsuhiro Kaneda	M,M,M,M,M,M	5 Nintendo DS	1	Deltora	Japan
Demikids: Dark Version	2003	Atlus	MIT	RPG, Monster Raising	Anime, Fantasy	Tomoyuki Hamada, Manabu Fujiki	M,M	2 GBA	1	Demikids	Japan
Demikids: Light Version	2003	Atlus	MIT	RPG, Monster Raising	Anime, Fantasy	Tomoyuki Hamada, Manabu Fujiki	M,M	2 GBA	1	Demikids	Japan
Demiarc: Rise of the Ku'tan	2000	Artifact Entertainment	Artifact Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Eric Speier	M	1 Windows	1		USA
Demon Gaze	2013	Kadokawa Games, NIS America	Kadokawa Games, Experience Inc.	RPG, Dungeon Crawler	Fantasy	Naoaki Jimbo	M	1 PS Vita	1		Japan
Demonicon	2013	Kalypso Media Digital	Noumena Studios GmbH	Action RPG	Fantasy	Michael Rother	M	1 Windows	1		Germany
Demon's Eye III	1998	Hobby Land Soft	Hobby Land Soft	RPG	Fantasy			PC-98	1	Demon's Eye	Japan
Demon's Souls	2009	SCE Japan Studio, Atlus USA, Namco Bandai Games	From Software	Action RPG	Horror, Fantasy	Shunsuke Kida	M	1 PS3	1	Souls	Japan
Dengeki Gakuen RPG: Cross of Venus	2009	ASCII Media Works	ASCII Media Works	Action RPG	Fantasy	Fuji Tanigawa	M	1 Nintendo DS	1		Japan
Depression Quest	2013	Zoe Quinn, David Lindsay	Zoe Quinn, David Lindsay	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Modern	Isaac Shankler	M	1 Browser-based	4		USA
Depths of Peril	2007	Solidak	Solidak	Action RPG	Fantasy	Zak Belica	M	1 Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Descent to Undermountain	1998	Interplay Productions	Interplay Productions	Action RPG	Fantasy	Richard Band	M	1 DOS, Windows	2		USA
Desert Time: Mugen no Meikyū	1998	Software House Parley	Software House Parley	RPG	Fantasy			Windows	1		Japan
Desktop Dungeons	2011	QCF Design	QCF Design	RPG	Fantasy	Herman Tulleken	M	1 Windows, Mac OS X, Browser-based	3		South Africa
deSPiRA	2001	Atlus	Dennou Eito Senkusho Ltd.	Action RPG	Post-Apocalyptic, Sci-Fi	Rick Hilman, Masataka Kitaura, Masahiko Kiritani, Julie Kiritani	M,M,M,F	4 Dreamcast	1		Japan
Deus Ex	2000	Eidos	Ion Storm	Action RPG, FPS	Sci-Fi	Alexander Brandon, Dan Gardopée, Michel van den Bos, Reeves Gabriels	M,M,M,M	4 Windows, Mac OS X, PS2, PS3	4	Deus Ex	USA
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	2011	Square Enix	Eidos Montréal, Nixxes Software, Feral Interactive, Straight Right Games	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Michael McCann	M	1 Windows, X360, PS3	3		USA
Deus Ex: Invisible War	2004	Eidos Interactive	Ion Storm	FPS, Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Alexander Brandon	M	1 Windows, Xbox	2	Deus Ex	USA
Deus Ex: The Fall	2013	Square Enix	N-Fusion Interactive Entertainment	FPS, Action RPG	Cyberpunk, Sci-Fi	Michael A. McCann	M	1 Windows, Android, iOS	3	Deus Ex	USA
Devil Summoner: Soul Hackers	1998	Atlus Co	Atlus Co	RPG	Sci-Fi	Shōji Meguro, Hidehito Aoki, Tsukasa Masuko	M,M,M	3 Saturn, PS1, 3DS	3	Devil Summoner	Japan
Devil Whiskey	2004	SSS	SSS	RPG, Adventure	Fantasy	Jon Stames	M	1 Windows, Linux	2		USA
Diablo II	2000	Blizzard	Blizzard, Blizzard North	Hack and Slash, Action RPG, Roguelike	Fantasy	Matt Ueliem	M	1 Windows, Mac OS X	2	Diablo	USA
Diablo III	2012	Blizzard Entertainment	Blizzard Entertainment	Action RPG	Horror, Fantasy	Russell Brower, Derek Duke, Glenn Stafford	M,M,M	3 Windows, PS3	2	Diablo	USA
Dicing Knight	2004	Qute	Platine Dispositif	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy			WonderSwan Color	1		Japan
Digimon Adventure 02: D1 Tamers	2000	Bandai	SIMS Co.	RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Makoto Iida	M	1 WonderSwan Color	2	Digimon	Japan
Digimon Adventure 02: Tag Tamers	2000	Bandai	SIMS Co.	RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Makoto Iida	M	1 WonderSwan Color	1	Digimon	Japan
Digimon Adventure: Anode Tamer	1999	Bandai	SIMS Co	RPG	Sci-Fi	Makoto Iida, Masahiro Itō	M,M	2 WonderSwan	1	Digimon	Japan
Digimon Adventure: Cathode Tamer	2000	Bandai	SIMS Co.	RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Makoto Iida, Masahiro Itō	M, M	2 WonderSwan	1	Digimon	Japan

Dragon Quest Monsters: Joker 2	2011	Square Enix	Tose	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	Nintendo DS	1	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Quest Monsters: Terry's Wonderland 3D	2012	Square Enix	Square Enix	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	3DS	2	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors	2007	Square Enix	Bing, Genius, Sonority	RPG	Fantasy	Manami Matsumae	M	1	Wii	1	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Quest V: Tenki no Hanayome	2004	Square Enix	Arte Piazza	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	PS2	1	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Revelation	2010	Nintendo	Square Enix	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	Nintendo DS, Android, iOS	3	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Quest VIII: Journey of the Cursed King	2004	Square Enix	Level-5	RPG	Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	PS2	1	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Quest X	2012	Square Enix	Square Enix, Armor Project	MMORPG	Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	Windows, Wii, Wii U, Android, iOS, PS4	6	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Quest X: Mezameshi Itsutsu no Shuzoku Online	2012	Square Enix	Square Enix, Armor Project	MMORPG	Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	Wii, Wii U, Windows, Android	4	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Quest X: Mezameshi Itsutsu no Shuzoku Online	2012	Square Enix	Square Enix, Armor Project	MMORPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	Wii, Wii U	2	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Riders: Chronicles of Pern	2003	Ubisoft	Ubli	Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	Laurent Parisi	M	1	Dreamcast, Windows	2	Adaptation of Dragonriders of Pern	UK
Dragon Shadow Spell	2007	Flight-Plan	Flight-Plan	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Takashi Okamoto, DaylightFever, Paul Agricol Genin	M,X,M	3	PS2	1		Japan
Dragon Warrior Monsters	1998	Eidos Interactive	Tose Co	RPG	Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	GBG	1	Dragon Warrior	Japan
Dragon Warrior Monsters	2000	Eidos Interactive Inc.	Tose Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	GBG	1	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Warrior Monsters 2: Cobi's Journey	2001	Enix	Tose Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	GBG	2	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Warrior Monsters 2: Tara's Adventure	2001	Enix	Tose Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	GBG	1	Dragon Quest	Japan
Dragon Warrior VII	2000	Enix, Square Enix	Heartbeat, Arte Piazza	RPG	Fantasy	Kiichi Sugiyama	M	1	PS1	1	Dragon Warrior	Japan
Dragoneer's Aria	2007	Nippon Ichi	Hi! Maker	RPG	Fantasy	Shinichirō Satō, Satoshi Okubo	M,M	2	PSP	1		Japan
Dragonfire: The Well of Souls	2000	TopWare Interactive	ComputerHouse, Target Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Carl Hanson	M	1	Windows	1	Well of Souls	Sweden
Dragonica (Dragon Saga)	2010	gPotato Europe, Gsquare, Nexon	Gravity Games	MMORPG	Anime, Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Dragon's Crown	2013	Index Digital Media	Vanillaware	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Hitoashi Sakimoto	M	1	PS Vita	1		Japan
Dragon's Dagna	2012	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG, Hack and Slash	Horror, Fantasy	Tadashi Makino, Rei Kondoh, Inon Zur, Masayoshi Ishi	M,M,M,M	4	X360, PS3	2		Japan
Dragon's Prophet	2013	Sony Online Entertainment	Runewaker Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Alex Pfeiffer, Alexander Röder, Mindy Lo, Rmoney Chen	M,M,F,M	4	Windows	1		China
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	2002	Sony Computer Entertainment	Surreal Software	Action RPG	Fantasy	Eric Aho	M	1	PS2	1		USA
Drakensang	2003	Square Enix, Take-Two	Cavia, Square Enix	Action RPG	Fantasy	Nobuyoshi Sano, Takayuki Aihara	M,M	2	PS2	1	Drakensang	Japan
Drakensang 2	2005	Square Enix, Ubisoft	Cavia, Square Enix	Action RPG	Fantasy	Ryoki Matsumoto, Aoi Yu, Yoshiaki Matsumoto	M,F,M	3	PS2	2	Drakensang	Japan
Drakensang 3	2013	Square Enix	Access Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kerichi Okabe	M	1	PS3	1	Drakensang	Japan
Drakensang Online	2012	Bigpoint	Bigpoint Berlin	MMORPG	Fantasy	Browser-based		1	Browser-based	1	Drakensang	Germany
Drakensang: Philosopher's Secret	2010	dtp entertainment	Radon Labs GmbH	RPG	Fantasy	Alexander Röder, Markus Schmidt, Jochen Flach, Benny Ochsmann	M,M,M,M	4	Windows	1	Drakensang	Germany
Drakensang: The Dark Eye	2008	dtp Entertainment, THQ, Eidos	Radon	RPG	Fantasy	Tilman Sillescu, Markus Schmidt, Pierre Langer	M,M,M	3	Windows	2	Drakensang	Germany
Drakensang: The River of Time	2010	dtp entertainment	Radon Labs GmbH	RPG	Fantasy	Dynamedion, Tilman Sillescu, Alexander Röder, Markus Schmidt, Jochen Flach	X,M,M,M,M	5	Windows	1	Drakensang	Germany
Dream of Mirror Online	2005	Suba Games, Aeris Games & Entertainment	DOMO Production	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Dreamlands	2007	Lockpick Entertainment	Lockpick Entertainment	MMORPG, Strategy	Fantasy	Robert F. Blom	M	1	Windows	2		Sweden
Drewnhar: Dzieło Magów	1997	L.K. Avalon	Poison Design	RPG	Fantasy	Dominik Libek	M	1	Amiga	1		Poland
Driftmoon	2013	Instant Kingdom	Instant Kingdom	RPG, Adventure	Fantasy	Gareth Meek	M	1	Windows	1		Finland
Drone Tactics	2008	Athlus	Success	Tactical RPG	Modern, Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	Nintendo DS	1		Japan
Duel Masters Kaijudo Showdown	2004	Atari	Mistic Software	Card-based RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Allister Brimble, Anthony N. Putson	M,M	2	GBA	2	Duel Masters	Canada
Duel Masters Sempai Legends	2003	Atari	Mistic Software	Card-based RPG	Fantasy	Allister Brimble, Anthony N. Putson	M,M	2	GBA	1	Duel Masters	Canada
Duel Masters: Shadow of the Code	2005	Atari	Mistic Software	Card-based RPG	Sci-Fi	Allister Brimble, Anthony N. Putson	M,M	2	GBA	1	Duel Masters	Canada
Duels	2007	Oxygen Games	Oxygen Games	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy				Browser-based	1		USA
Dungeon Adventure	2010	UberGeekGames	UberGeekGames	RPG	Fantasy				X360	1		USA
Dungeon Cleaners	2006	IC Company	IC Company	Action RPG	Post-Apocalyptic				Windows	1		Russia
Dungeon Defenders	2010	Reverb Triple XP	Trendy Entertainment	Tower Defence, Action RPG	Fantasy	Afsin Toufghian	M	1	Android	7	Dungeon Defenders	USA
Dungeon Explorer: Warrior of the Ancient Arts	2008	Hudson Soft	Hudson Soft	Action RPG	Fantasy	T's Music, Yutaka Takahashi, Takeshi Sato, Satoshi Okubo	X,M,M,M	4	PS2, Nintendo DS	2		USA
Dungeon Explorer: Warriors of Ancient Arts	2008	Hudson Entertainment	Hudson Soft Company	Action RPG	Fantasy	Hisashi Kawamoto, Yakan Noguchi, Mirei Takeuchi, Yoimasa Ohta, Hirohito Inoue, Kazuo Doi	M,M,F,M,M,F	6	PSP, Nintendo DS	2		Japan
Dungeon Fighter Online	2005	Neople	Neople	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1	Dungeon Fighter	South Korea
Dungeon Hearts	2013	Devolver Digital	Cube Roots	Puzzle, RPG	Fantasy	Chris J Naim	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, iOS	4		USA
Dungeon Lords	2005	DreamCatcher Interactive	Heuristic Park Inc.	Action RPG	Fantasy	PCB Productions	X	1	Windows	1	Dungeon Lords	USA
Dungeon Maker: Hunting Ground	2007	XSEED Games	Global A Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Hideki Yamamoto	M	1	PSP	1		Japan
Dungeon Master Nexus	1998	Victor Interactive Software	Victor Interactive Software	RPG	Fantasy	Tsukasa Tawada	M	1	Saturn	1	Dungeon Master	Japan
Dungeon Pub Crawl	2013	Grey Allen Games	Grey Allen Games	RPG	Fantasy	Jake Birkett	M	1	Browser-based	1		UK
Dungeon Runners	2008	NCsoft	NCsoft	MMORPG, Action	Fantasy	Pedro Seminario	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Dungeon Siege	2002	Microsoft Game Studios	Gas Powered Games	RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule	M	1	Windows	1	Dungeon Siege	USA
Dungeon Siege II	2005	Microsoft	Gas Powered Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule	M	1	Windows	1	Dungeon Siege	USA
Dungeon Siege III	2011	Square Enix	Obsidian Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jason Graves, Timothy Michael Winn	M,M	2	Windows, X360, PS3	3	Dungeon Siege	USA
Dungeon Siege: Throne of Agony	2006	2K	SuperVillain	RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule, Julian Soule	M,M	2	PSP	1	Dungeon Siege	USA
Dungeon Solitaire	2010	Foundation 9 Entertainment	Griptonite Games	Card-based RPG	Fantasy	Evan Buehler	M	1	iOS	1		USA
Dungeon Travelers 2: The Royal Library & the Monster Seal	2013	Aquaplus, Athus, NIS America	Sting Entertainment	RPG, Dungeon Crawler	Fantasy	Jump Matsushita, Shinya Ishikawa, Michio Kirugaya, Hideo Mitsuha	M,M,M,M	4	PSP, PS Vita	2	Dungeon Travelers	Japan
Dungeons & Dragons Online: Stormreach	2006	Atari, Codemasters, Warner Bros Interactive	Turbine	MMORPG	Fantasy	Stephen DiGregorio	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2	D&D	USA
Dungeons & Dragons Tactics	2007	Atari	Kuju	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Ian Livingstone	M	1	PSP	1	D&D	UK
Dungeons & Dragons: Daggerdale	2011	Atari	Bedlam Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Brian Shelton, Jennifer Costa	M,F	2	Windows, X360, PS3	3	D&D	Canada
Dungeons & Dragons: Dragonshard	2005	Atari	Liquid	RTS, Action RPG	Fantasy	Lennie Moore	M	2	Windows	2	D&D	USA
Dungeons & Dragons: Eye of the Beholder	2002	Infogrames	Pronto Games	RPG	Fantasy	Harmonic Engineering, Andrew Edlen	X,M	2	GBA	1	D&D	USA
Dungeons & Dragons: Heroes	2003	Atari	Atari	Hack and Slash, RPG	Fantasy	Gary Spinrad	M	1	Xbox	1	D&D	USA
Dungeons Lands	2005	Typhoon Games	Heuristic Park	RPG	Fantasy	Brian Coburn	M	1	Windows	2	Dungeon Lords	USA

Dungeons of Despair	2006	Raywireless	Dallan BeTop Multimedia	RPG	Fantasy					J2ME	1		China	
Dungeons of Dredmor	2011	Gadlamp Games	Gadlamp Games	RPG	Fantasy	Matthew Steele	M		1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3	Dungeons of Dredmor	USA	
Dust: An Elysian Tale	2012	Microsoft Studios	Humble Hearts	Action RPG, Beat 'em Up	Fantasy	HyperDuck SoundWorks, Alexander Brandon	X,M		2	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, XBLA, iOS	5		USA	
Dynasty Tactics	2002	KOEI Co.	KOEI Co.	Tactical RPG	Historical					PS2		1 Dynasty Tactics	Japan	
Dynasty Warriors Online (Shin Sangoku Musou)	2006	Tecmo Koei	Tecmo Koei	Hack and Slash, MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy	Hironobu Kageyama, Yasumasa Kato, MASA, Michihiko Shichi, Kenji Nakajo, Shiro-ichiro Nakamura, Masato Koike, Kensuke Inage	M,M,M,M,M,M,M,M		8	Windows, PS3	2	Dynasty Warriors	Japan	
E.V.E: Divine Cybermancy	2011	Stream On Studio	Stream On Studio	Action RPG	Cyberpunk, Sci-Fi					Windows		1	France	
Eador: Genesis	2013	Artifactorium	Artifactorium	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Evgenny Gulyagin	M		1	Windows	1		Russia	
Earth & Beyond	2002	Westwood Studios	EA	MMORPG	Sci-Fi	David Arkenstone, Frank Klepacki	M,M		2	Windows	1		USA	
Earthrise	2011	Masthead Studios	Masthead Studios	MMORPG, Action	Post-Apocalyptic, Sci-Fi	Pavel Benov, Borislav Slavov, Victor Stoyanov	M,M,M		3	Windows	1		Bulgaria	
Echo of Soul	2013	Aeria Games, NHN Entertainment, Changyou	Nelus	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed internally	X		1	Windows	1		South Korea	
Eden Eternal (Finding Neverland Online)	2010	Aeria Games	X-Legend	MMORPG	Anime, Fantasy					Windows		1	China	
Eerie Estate Agent	2012	Choice of Games	Choice of Games	Text based, Adventure, RPG	Horror	NO MUSIC				Android, Browser-based, Kindle Classic, iOS	4	Choice of	USA	
EGG: Elemental Gimmick Gear	1999	Vatical Entertainment	Birthday	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Haruyoshi Rokudo	M		1	Dreamcast	1		Japan	
Egria: Guardian Sword II	2000	Technical Group	WindThunder	RPG	Fantasy					Windows		1	China	
Elhazil: God Bless the Ring	1998	Namco Ltd., Square, EA	Dream Factory	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Takayuki Nakamura, Motoko Hieda	M,F		2	Arcade, PS1, PSP, PS Vita, PS3	5		Japan	
Eien no Aseria: Kono Daichi no Hate de	2005	Nippon Ichi	Kuse	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy					PS2		1	Japan	
Elthela	2001	Atlus	TamTam	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Shintaro Hirakawa	M		1	PS1	1		Japan	
Eludorado: Romgreich inner Spiegel	1997	Black Package	Black Package	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy					PC-98		1	Japan	
Eldorado Gate Volume 1	2000	Capcom	Capcom	RPG	Fantasy	Hideaki Utsumi	M		1	Dreamcast	1	Eldorado Gate	Japan	
Eldorado Gate Volume 2	2000	Capcom	Capcom	RPG	Fantasy	Hideaki Utsumi	M		1	Dreamcast	1	Eldorado Gate	Japan	
Eldorado Gate Volume 3	2001	Capcom	Capcom	RPG	Fantasy					Dreamcast		1	Eldorado Gate	Japan
Eldorado Gate Volume 4	2001	Capcom	Capcom	RPG	Fantasy					Dreamcast		1	Eldorado Gate	Japan
Eldorado Gate Volume 5	2001	Capcom	Capcom	RPG	Fantasy					Dreamcast		1	Eldorado Gate	Japan
Eldorado Gate Volume 6	2001	Capcom	Capcom	RPG	Fantasy					Dreamcast		1	Eldorado Gate	Japan
Eldorado Gate Volume 7	2001	Capcom	Capcom	RPG	Fantasy					Dreamcast		1	Eldorado Gate	Japan
Eldritch	2011	Minor Key Games	Minor Key Games	Action RPG	Horror	J. Kyle Pittman	M		1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		USA	
Elemental Gelade: Tozasareishi Uta	2005	Tomy	Jupiter Corp.	RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi					GBA		1	Elemental Gelade	Japan
Elemental Masters	2010	Biggames GmbH	Biggames GmbH	Card-based RPG	Fantasy					Nintendo DS		1	Germany	
Elephant Quest	2011	Armor Games	Armor Games, jmb02 Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi					Browser-based		1	USA	
Elkur	2003	Dartmoor Softworks GmbH & Co. KG	g2G Entertainment Company Ltd.	Action RPG	Fantasy					Windows		1	Germany	
Elminage	2008	Starfish SD, UFO Interactive Games	Opera House, Starfish SD	Dungeon Crawler, RPG	Fantasy	Hirosaki Sakamoto, Masaharu Iwata, Mitsuhiro Kaneeda, Kimihito Abe, Noriyuki Kamikura	M,M,M,M,M		5	PS2, Nintendo DS, PSP	3	Elminage	Japan	
Elminage Gothic	2012	Starfish SD, Ghostlight	Starfish SD	Dungeon Crawler, RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Yamazaki	M		1	Windows, PSP, 3DS	3	Elminage	Japan	
Elminage Iban	2012	Starfish SD	Starfish SD	Dungeon Crawler, RPG	Fantasy					PSP		1	Elminage	Japan
Elminage II	2009	Starfish SD, UFO Interactive Games	Opera House, Starfish SD	Dungeon Crawler, RPG	Fantasy	Hirosaki Sakamoto	M		1	PSP, Nintendo DS	2	Elminage	Japan	
Elminage III	2011	Starfish SD	Opera House	Dungeon Crawler, RPG	Fantasy					PSP		1	Elminage	Japan
Elsword	2007	Nexon, Gamania, NHN Japan, KOG Games, Aiasoft, Netmarble, Level up!, Gameforge, Garena	KOG Studios	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy	Iz, Kenichi Maeyamada, MARKOV	M,M,?		3	Windows	1		South Korea	
Elvandia Story	2007	Spilke	Spilke	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Norihiro Hibino, Noriyuki Iwadare	M,M		2	PS2	1		Japan	
Emil Chronicle Online	2005	Gravity, BROCCOLI	Headlock	MMORPG	Fantasy	Kenji Hiramatsu, Greenwich Fields, ACE (Tomori Kudo, Chico Yamanaka (CHICO))	M,X,M,F		4	Windows	1		Japan	
Empire & State	2011	Novel Inc	Novel Inc	Strategy, MMORPG	Sci-Fi					Browser-based		1	USA	
Enchanted Arms	2006	FromSoftware, Ubisoft	FromSoftware	RPG	Fantasy	Yûki Ichiki	M		1	X360, PS3	2		Japan	
Enchanted Forest	1998	RinkWorks	RinkWorks	RPG	Fantasy					Browser-based		1	Enchanted Forest	USA
Enchanted Forest II	2000	RinkWorks	RinkWorks	RPG	Fantasy					Browser-based		1	Enchanted Forest	USA
End of Twilight	2001	New Media Generation	Craftpath Software, New Media Generation	RPG	Fantasy	Sergey Perminov	M		1	Windows	1		Japan	
Endless Ages	2003	Summitsoft Entertainment	Avalia Corp	FPS, MMORPG	Sci-Fi	Sound Guild, James Joseph	X,M		2	Windows		1	USA	
Entropia Universe	2003	MindArk	MindArk	FPS, MMORPG	Sci-Fi					Windows		1	Sweden	
Ephemeral Fantasia	2000	Konami	Konami	RPG	Fantasy	Waichiro Ozaki	M		1	PS2	1		Japan	
Eragon	2006	Sierra Entertainment	Amaze Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Ian Stocker, Steven Velema	M,M		2	GBA	1	Eragon	USA	
Erebus 2	2010	Zeni Interactive	Zeni Interactive	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		1	Windows		1	South Korea	
Erinia	2004	Ignis Entretenimento e Informática S/A	Ignis Entretenimento e Informática S/A	MMORPG	Fantasy	Frederico Flores	M		1	Windows	1		Brazil	
Escape from Paradise City	2007	CDV Software Entertainment	Sirius Games	Strategy, Action RPG	Modern, Crime	Adam Gregersen	M		1	Windows	1		Denmark	
Eschalon: Book I	2007	Basilisk Games	Basilisk Games	RPG	Fantasy	Borislav Slavov, Victor Stoyanov, Mark Deaton, Kevin MacLeod, Krzysztof Wierzykiewicz	M,M,M,M,M		5	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Eschalon	USA	
Eschalon: Book II	2010	Basilisk Games	Basilisk Games	RPG	Fantasy	Borislav Slavov, Victor Stoyanov, Kevin MacLeod, David John, Mark Deaton	M,M,M,M,M		5	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3	Eschalon	USA	
Eternal Eyes	1999	Crave Entertainment	TamTam	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kiyotaka Sato, Shintaro Hirakawa	M,M		2	PS1		1	Japan	
Eternal Lands	2003	Radu Privantu	Radu Privantu	MMORPG	Fantasy					Windows, Mac OS X, Linux		1	USA	
Eternal Poison	2008	Bangresto, Atlus	Flight Plan	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Takashi Okamoto, Yuki Nakagawa, Kazuma Katagiri, Yuichiro Sato, Yuta Okamoto	M,M,M,M,M		5	PS2		1	Japan	
Eternal Quest	2004	Midas Interactive Entertainment	Tamsoft Corporation	RPG	Fantasy	Ken Kojima	M		1	PS2		1	Japan	
Eternal Ring	2000	From	Agatec	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tsukasa Saitoh, Keiichirô Segawa, Yûji Kanda	M, M, M		3	PS2		1	Japan	
Eternal Sonata	2007	Namco Bandai	Tri-Crescendo	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M		1	X360		1	Japan	
Ether Saga Odyssey	2008	Perfect World Entertainment, Gamestar, Arc Games	Beijing Perfect World	MMORPG	Fantasy					Windows		1	China	
Etrian Odyssey	2007	Atlus, Nintendo	Atlus, Lancarse	RPG	Fantasy	Yuuzo Koshiro	M		1	Nintendo DS	1	Etrian Odyssey	Japan	
Etrian Odyssey II: Heroes of Lagaard	2008	Atlus	Atlus	RPG	Fantasy	Yuuzo Koshiro	M		1	Nintendo DS	1	Etrian Odyssey	Japan	
Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City	2013	Atlus	Atlus	RPG	Fantasy	Yuuzo Koshiro	M		1	Nintendo DS	1	Etrian Odyssey	Japan	
Etrian Odyssey IV: Legends of the Titan	2013	NIS America	Atlus	RPG	Fantasy	Yuuzo Koshiro	M		1	3DS	1	Etrian Odyssey	Japan	

Eslemons Online	2006	TQ Digital	Netdragon	MMORPG	Fantasy			Windows	1		China
EVE Online	2003	Crucial Entertainment	CCP Games	Simulation, MMORPG	Sci-Fi	Jon Hallur Haraldsson	M	1 Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3	EVE	Iceland
Evergrace	2000	From	Agetec	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kōta Hoshino, Yūji Kanda, Keiichirō Segawa, Tsukasa Sakō	M,M,M,M	4 PS2	1		Japan
EverQuest	1999	SOE	MMORPG	Fantasy	Fantasy	Jay Barbeau	M	1 Windows, Macintosh	2	EverQuest	USA
EverQuest II	2004	Sony Online Entertainment	Sony Online Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy	Laura Karpman	F	1 Windows	2	Everquest	USA
EverQuest Online Adventures	2003	Sony Online Entertainment	Sony Online Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule, Jeremy Bell, Rob King, Paul Romero	M,M,M,M	4 PS2	1	Everquest	USA
Evil Islands: Curse of the Lost Soul	2000	Fishtank	Nival	RPG	Fantasy	Andrey Fedorenko, Konstantin Glazunov, Maksim Sudyn	M,M,M	3 Windows	1		Russia
EvilQuest	2012	Chaossoft Games	Chaossoft Games	Action RPG	Fantasy			Windows, X360	2		USA
Eviland	2013	Plug In Digital	Shiro Games	RPG	Fantasy	Camille Schoell	M	Windows, Mac OS X, Android, iOS	4		France
Evolution 2: Far off Promise	1999	Ubisoft	Sting	RPG	Fantasy	Masaharu Iwata	M	1 Dreamcast	1	Evolution	Japan
Evolution Worlds	2002	Ubisoft	Sting Inc.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Maanobu Tsukamoto, Gash-NAGAO	M,?	2 Gamecube	1	Evolution	Japan
Evolution: The World of Sacred Device	1999	Ubisoft	Gekkou, Sting	RPG	Fantasy	Masaharu Iwata	M	1 Dreamcast	2	Evolution	Japan
Ex Machina Arcade	2007	Buka Entertainment	Targem Games	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Anton Popov	M	1 Windows	1		Russia
Excalibur	2001	Dinamic Multimedia	Enigma Software	Strategy, RPG, Stealth	Fantasy			Windows	1		Spain
Excelsior Phase Two: Errondur	2000	11th Dimension Entertainment	11th Dimension Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Jimmy Remmer	M	1 Windows	1	Excelsior	USA
Exile III: Ruined World	1997	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy	NO MUSIC		Windows, Macintosh, Linux	3		USA
Expeditions: Conquistador	2013	HNComposer Entertainment	Logic Artists	Strategy, RPG	Historical, War	Leo Badinella	M	1 Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		Denmark
Fable	2004	Microsoft	Lionhead	Action RPG	Fantasy	Danny Elfman, Russell Shaw	M,M	2 Xbox	1	Fable	USA
Fable II	2008	Microsoft	Lionhead	Action RPG	Fantasy	Danny Elfman, Russell Shaw	M,M	2 X360	1	Fable	USA
Fable III	2010	Microsoft Game Studios	Lionhead Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Russell Shaw	M	1 X360	1	Fable	UK
Fable: The Journey	2012	Microsoft	Lionhead Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Russell Shaw	M	1 X360	1	Fable	UK
Fable: The Lost Chapters	2004	Activision	Lionhead Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Danny Elfman, Russell Shaw	M,M	2 Windows, Xbox	2	Fable	USA
Fabled Lands: The War Torn Kingdom	2011	Megara Entertainment	Megara Entertainment	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy			iOS	1	Fabled Lands	France
Fagade	2005	Procedural Arts LLC	Procedural Arts LLC	RPG	Modern	Billy Gomborg, Matt Garneau, Jim Doran, Aaron Acosta, Leo Caruso	M,M,M,M,M	5 Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Face of Mankind	2006	NeXeon Technologies	Duplex Systems, Nexxon Technologies	Action, MMORPG	Sci-Fi	Christopher Dierks	M	1 Windows	1		Germany
Faery: Legends of Avalon	2011	Focus Home Interactive	SPIDERS	RPG	Fantasy	Markus Schmidt	M	1 Windows, X360, PS3	3		France
Faune	2013	URARA-WORKS	Skymore, URARA-WORKS	RPG	Fantasy			Android, iOS, 3DS	3		Japan
Fairy Fencer F	2013	Compile Heart, Idea Factory	Compile Heart, Idea Factory	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kenji Kaneko, Nobuo Uematsu, Yoh Ukiyama, Yoshiki Katoh, Yosuke Kurokawa, Michio Okamura	M,M,M,M,M,M,M	6 Windows, PS3, PS4	3		Japan
Fallen Earth	2009	K2 Network	Reloaded Productions, Fallen Earth LLC	Action, MMORPG	Post-apocalyptic	Enrique Varela Jr., Michael Franke	M,M	2 Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Falling Stars	2007	Agetec	Ivolgamus	Action RPG	Fantasy	Sergej Trofimov	M	1 Windows, PS2	2		Lithuania
Fallout 2	1998	Interplay Productions	Black Isle Studios	RPG	Post-apocalyptic, Sci-Fi	Mark Morgan	M	1 Windows, Macintosh	2	Fallout	USA
Fallout 3	2008	Bethesda Softworks	Bethesda Game Studios	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Inon Zur	M	1 Windows, X360, PS3	3	Fallout	USA
Fallout Tactics: Brotherhood of Steel	2001	Interplay	Micro Forté, 34° East	RPG	Post-Apocalyptic	Inon Zur	M	1 Windows	1	Fallout	USA
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	2004	Interplay	Interplay	Action RPG	Post-Apocalyptic	Craig Stuart Garfinkle, Devin Townsend, Matt Gruber	M,M,M	3 PS2, Xbox	2	Fallout	USA
Fallout: New Vegas	2010	Bethesda Softworks	Obsidian Entertainment	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Inon Zur, Mark Morgan	M,M	2 Windows, X360, PS3	3	Fallout	USA
Fantage	2008	Fantage	Fantage	MMORPG	Fantasy			Browser-based	1		USA
Fantasia Sango	2003	UserJoy Technology	Unistar	RPG	Fantasy	Wu Chin Chin	M	1 Windows	1	Fantasia Sango	China
Fantasia Sango II	2005	Unistar	UserJoy Technology	RPG	Fantasy			Windows	1	Fantasia Sango	China
Fantasia Sango III	2007	Unistar	UserJoy Technology	RPG	Fantasy	Wu Jingling, Liu Yu Yun, (Xu small studio)	F,F,X	3 Windows	1	Fantasia Sango	China
Fantasia Sango IV	2007	Unistar	UserJoy Technology	RPG	Fantasy	XiaoXu Lu	F	1 Windows	1	Fantasia Sango	China
Fantasy Life	2012	Level-5, Nintendo	Level-5, Brownie Brown, h.a.n.d.	Simulation, RPG	Fantasy	Nobuo Uematsu	M	1 3DS	1		Japan
Fantasy Westward Journey	2004	NetEase	NetEase	MMORPG	Fantasy			Windows	1	Fantasy Westward Journey	China
Farland Odyssey	1999	Technical Group	Technical Group	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Ichio	M	1 Windows	1	Farland	Japan
Farland Saga: Toki no Michishirube	1997	Technical Group	Technical Group	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Ichio	M	1 Windows, PS1, Saturn	3	Farland	Japan
FATE	2005	WildTangent	WildStudios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Marc Pospisil, Travis Baldree	M,M	2 Windows	1		USA
Fate/Extra	2010	Marvelous Entertainment, Aksys Games, Ghostlight	Type-Moon, Image Epoch	RPG	Alternate Reality, Fantasy	Shinji Hosoe	M	1 PSP	1	Fate/Extra	Japan
Fate/Extra CCC	2013	Marvelous Entertainment, Aksys Games, Ghostlight	Type-Moon, Image Epoch	RPG	Alternate Reality, Fantasy	Kanon Wakeshima, Keita Haga (KATE), James Harris, Kakeru Ishihama	F,M,M,M	4 PSP	1	Fate/Extra	Japan
Fate: Undiscovered Realms	2008	WildTangent, Encore	WildTangent	Action RPG, Roguelike	Fantasy			Windows	1		USA
Faion Online	2011	UTV Ignition Games	UTV True Games	MMORPG	Fantasy			Windows	1		USA
Feng Yun 2: Qi Wuqi	2003	InterServ International	InterServ International	RPG	Anime, Fantasy			Windows	1		China
Fengse Huanxiang	1999	FunYours Tech	FunYours Tech	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Shoguniko	?	1 Windows	1	Wind Fantasy	Japan
Fengse Huanxiang 2	2002	Unistar	FunYours Technology	RPG	Anime, Fantasy			Windows	1	Fengse Huanxiang	China
Fengse Huanxiang 3: Zui yu Fa de Zhenhunge	2004	Unistar	FunYours Technology	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy			Windows	1		China
Fengse Huanxiang 5: Chi Yue Zhanzheng	2006	Unistar	FunYours Technology	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy			Windows	1	Fengse Huanxiang	China
Field Commander	2006	Sony Online Entertainment	Sony Online Entertainment, Mind Control Software	Tactical RPG	Modern	Laura Karpman	F	1 PSP	1		USA
Fiesta Online	2007	Ons On Soft, gamigo AG	Ons On Soft	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1 Windows	1		South Korea
Fighting Fantasy: City of Thieves	2010	Big Blue Bubble Inc.	Big Blue Bubble Inc.	Text based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	NO MUSIC		iOS	1	Fighting Fantasy	Canada
Fighting Legends Online	2001	Maximum Charisma Studios	Maximum Charisma Studios	MMO, Action, RPG	Historical, Fantasy	Jeffrey Linsenbiger	M	1 Windows	1		USA
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles	2003	Square Enix, Nintendo	The Game Designers Studio	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kumli Tanioka	F	1 Gamecube	1	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo's Dungeon	2008	Square Enix	h.a.n.d. Inc.	Action RPG	Fantasy	Nobuo Uematsu, Yuzo Takahashi	M,M	2 Wii	1	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy IX	2000	Square, Infogrames	Square	RPG	Fantasy	Nobuo Uematsu	M	1 PS1	2	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy Tactics	1997	Square	Square	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Masaharu Iwata, Hitoshi Sakimoto	M,M	2 PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita, iOS	5	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy Tactics A2: Grimoire of the Rift	2007	Square Enix	Square Enix	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Hitoshi Sakimoto	M	1 Nintendo DS	1	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy Tactics Advance	2003	Square, Nintendo	Square	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Hitoshi Sakimoto, Kaori Ohkoshi, Ayako Saso, Nobuo Uematsu	M,F,F,M	4 GBA	1	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy Tactics: The War of the Lions	2007	Square Enix	TOSE, Square Enix	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Hitoshi Sakimoto, Masaharu Iwata	M,M	2 PSP, iOS, Android	3	Final Fantasy	Japan

Final Fantasy Type 0	2011	Square Enix	Square Enix	Action RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Takeharu Ishimoto	M	1	PSP	1	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy VII	1997	Square	Square	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Nobuo Uematsu	M	1	Windows, PS1, PS3, PSP, PS Vita, PS4, Android, iOS	9	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy VIII	1999	Square	Square	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Nobuo Uematsu	M	1	Vita	5	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy X	2001	Square	Square	RPG	Fantasy	Nobuo Uematsu, Masashi Hamauzu, Junya Nakano	M,M,M	3	PS2	1	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy X-2	2003	Square Enix	Square	RPG	Fantasy	Noriko Matsueda, Takahito Eguchi	F,M	2	PS2, PS3	2	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy XI Online	2002	Sony Computer Entertainment	Square Enix	MMORPG	Fantasy	Naoshi Mizuta, Kumi Tanioka, Nobuo Uematsu	M,F,M	3	Windows, PS2, X360	9	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy XII	2006	Square Enix	Square Enix	RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Sakimoto, Hayato Matsuo, Masaharu Iwata	M,M,M	3	PS2	1		Japan
Final Fantasy XIII: Revenant Wings	2007	Square Enix	Square Enix	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Sakimoto, Kenichiro Fukui	M,M	2	Nintendo DS	1	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy XIII	2009	Square Enix	Square Enix	RPG	Fantasy	Masashi Hamauzu	M	1	Windows, X360, PS3	9	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy XIII-2	2012	Square Enix	Square Enix, tri-Ace	Action RPG	Fantasy	Masashi Hamauzu, Naoshi Mizuta, Nitsuto Suzuki	M,M,M	3	Windows, X360, PS3	9	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy XIV	2010	Square Enix	Square Enix	MMORPG	Fantasy	Nobuo Uematsu, Ryo Yamazaki, Naoshi Mizuta, Tsuyoshi Sekito, Masayoshi Soken	M,M,M,M,M	5	Windows	1	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	2013	Square Enix	Square Enix	MMORPG	Fantasy	Masayoshi Soken	M	1	Windows, PS3, PS4	9	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles - Echoes of Time	2009	Square Enix	Square Enix	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kumi Tanioka	F	1	Wii, Nintendo DS	2	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles - The Crystal Bearers	2009	Square Enix	Square Enix	Action RPG	Fantasy	Hideonori Iwasaki, Ryo Yamazaki, Kumi Tanioka	M,M,F	3	Wii	1	Final Fantasy	Japan
Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light	2009	Square Enix	Square Enix, Matrix Software	RPG	Fantasy	Naoshi Mizuta	M	1	Nintendo DS	1	Final Fantasy	Japan
Fire Emblem	2003	Nintendo	Intelligent	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Yuka Tsujiyoko, Saki Haruyama	F,F	2	GBA	1	Fire Emblem	Japan
Fire Emblem: Awakening	2013	Nintendo	Intelligent Systems	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Hiroaki Moriishita, Rei Kondo	M,M	2	3DS	1	Fire Emblem	Japan
Fire Emblem: Fûn no Yûnagi	2002	Nintendo	Intelligent	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Yuka Tsujiyoko	F	1	GBA, Wii U Virtual Console	2	Fire Emblem	Japan
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	2005	Nintendo	Intelligent Systems	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Yoshito Hirano, Saki Haruyama, Naoko Mitome, Atsushi Yoshida, Kanako Teramae	M,F,F,M,M	5	Gamecube	1	Fire Emblem	Japan
Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn	2007	Nintendo	Intelligent Systems	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Yoshito Hirano, Chika Sekigawa, Naoko Mitome	M,F,F	3	Wii	1	Fire Emblem	Japan
Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon	2008	Nintendo	Intelligent Systems	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Saki Kausga	F	1	Nintendo DS, Wii U	2	Fire Emblem	Japan
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones	2004	Nintendo	Intelligent	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Yoshihiko Kitamura, Saki Haruyama, Yoshito Hirano	M,F,M	3	GBA, 3DS Virtual Console, Wii U Virtual Console	3	Fire Emblem	Japan
Fire Emblem: Thracia 776	1999	Nintendo	Intelligent Systems	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Yuka Tsujiyoko, Kow Otani	F,M	2	SNES, Wii, Wii U, 3DS	4	Fire Emblem	Japan
Fixedfall	2011	Red 5 Studios, Garena	Red 5 Studios	FPS, MMORPG	Sci-Fi	Michael Bros, Boon Sim	M,M	2	Windows, PS4	2		USA
Flame Dragon Plus: Marks of Wind	1998	Dynasty International	Dynasty International	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy				IOS, Windows	2	Flame Dragon	China
FlatSpace	2003	Comutopia Software	Comutopia Software	Strategy, Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Mark Sheehy	M	1	Windows, IOS	2		UK
Florensia	2008	Burda Interactive Netts Corp	NETTS	MMORPG	Fantasy	SHK (Soundkick)	X	1	Windows	1		Japan
Hyff	2005	Gala LA, Macizwell Tech, Wessien, Inc Digital, VOC-NEZE, Level-up!, PlayMapo	Gala Lab Corp.	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Folklore	2007	Sony Computer Entertainment	Game Republic Inc.	Action RPG	Fantasy, Mystery	Toshiyuki Kishi, Kenji Kawai, Ayako Saso, Shinji Hosoe, Hiroto Satō	M,M,F,M,M	5	PS3	1		Japan
Folklore (Unknown Realms)	2007	Sony Computer Entertainment	Game Republic	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Kawai, Ayako Saso, Shinji Hosoe, Hiroto Satō	M,F,M,M	4	PS3	1		Japan
Football Superstars	2009	Cybersports	Monumental Games	MMORPG, Sports	Modern, Sports	Wasted Apple, Deadbead Descendants, Burning Idiot Noise, Teen Evil, Purple Hertz, Jamcon yea2	X,X,X,X,X,X	6	Windows	1		UK
Forever Kingdom	2002	Agatec	FromSoftware	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kota Hoshino	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Forgiveness: The First Chapter	2006	Breakthrough	Breakthrough	RPG	Religious, Fantasy				Windows	1	Forgiveness	USA
Forgiveness: The Second Chapter	2007	Breakthrough	Breakthrough	RPG	Religious, Fantasy				Windows	1	Forgiveness	USA
Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone	2004	Atari	Stormfront, Knyvalide, Zono	Action RPG	Fantasy	Robb Mills	M	1	PS2, Xbox	2	GBD	USA
Forgotten Saga	1997	Phantagram	Senjori	RPG	Fantasy				IOS, Windows	2		South Korea
Forbidden World	2010	Arc Games, Perfect World Entertainment	Perfect World Co.	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Fort Zombie	2011	Paradox Interactive AB	Kerberos Productions	Strategy, Action RPG	Horror	Sound Rangers	X	1	Windows	1		Canada
Fragile Dreams: Farewell Ruins of the Moon	2010	Xored Games	Namco, tri-Crescendo	RPG	Alternate Reality, Fantasy	Riei Saito	F	1	Wii	1		Japan
Fragoria	2011	Datcroft Games	Rusofware	MMORPG	Fantasy				Browser-based	1		Russia
Free Realms	2009	Sony Online Entertainment	Sony Online Entertainment	MMORPG, Sports, Action	Music, Fantasy	Atli Örnarsóðn	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, PS3	3		USA
Freedom Force	2002	EA, 2K Games	Irrational	RTS, Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Eric Brosius	M	1	Windows	2	Freedom Force	USA
Freedom Force vs The 3rd Reich	2005	Vivendi Universal	Irrational	Tactical RPG	Superheroes	Eric Brosius	M	1	Windows	1	Freedom Force	USA
Freshly-Picked Tingle's Rosy Rupeeland	2006	Nintendo	Vanpool	Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	Masahiro Adachi	M	1	Nintendo DS	1	The Legend of Zelda	Japan
From the Abyss	2009	Akkyo Games	Sonic Powered	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Nintendo DS	1		Japan
Front Mission 1st	2003	Square Enix	Square Enix	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Yoko Shimomura, Noriko Matsueda	F,F	2	PS1, Nintendo DS, PSN	3		Japan
Front Mission 2	1997	SCI	Square	RPG	Sci-Fi	Noriko Matsueda	F	1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4	Front Mission	Japan
Front Mission 3	1999	Square	Square	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Hayato Matsuo, Kōji Hayama, Shigeki	M,M,M	3	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4	Front Mission	Japan
Front Mission 4	2003	Square Enix	Square Enix	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Hideonori Iwasaki, Ryo Yamazaki	M,M	2	PS2	1	Front Mission	Japan
Front Mission 5: Scars of the War	2005	Square Enix	Square Enix	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Hideonori Iwasaki	M	1	PS2	1	Front Mission	Japan
Front Mission: Alternative	1997	Square	Square	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Junya Nakano	M	1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4	Front Mission	Japan
Frozen Hearth	2012	Immanitas Entertainment	Epiphany Games	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Mike Gordon	M	1	Windows	1		Australia
Fullmetal Alchemist 2: Curse of the Crimson Elixir	2004	Square Enix	Racjin	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Tomohiko Sato	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Fullmetal Alchemist and the Broken Angel	2003	Square Enix	Racjin	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tomohiko Sato, Makoto Suehiro, Isao Kasai, Kenji Tani	M,M,M,M	4	PS2	1	Full Metal Alchemist	Japan
Fushigi Dungeon - Furai no Shiren Gaden: Onnakemshi Asuka Kenzan	2002	Sega	Sega	RPG	Fantasy	Koichi Sugiyama, Hayato Matsuo	M,M	2	Dreamcast	1	Mystery Dungeon	Japan
Fusion: Genesis	2011	Microsoft Studios	Starfire Studios	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Steven Burke	M	1	X360	1		UK
Future Tactics: The Uprising	2004	Crave, JoWood	2nd Two	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Tim Follen	M	1	Xbox, PS2, Gamecube	3		USA
G.O.D Pure	1998	Imagineer Co	Infinity Co	RPG	Sci-Fi	Yuuichi Matsuzaki, Manami Matsumae, Kimataka Matsumae	M,F,M	3	PS1	1	G.O.D	Japan
Gaia Master Kessen	2000	Capcom	Capcom	RPG, Card-based	Fantasy				Dreamcast	1	Gaia Master	Japan
Galaxy Fräulein Yuna 3: Lightning Angel	1997	Hudson Soft Company	Hudson Soft Company	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Takanori Arizawa	M	1	Saturn	1	Galaxy Fräulein Yuna	Japan
Game of Thrones	2012	Atlus, Focus Home Interactive	Cyanide	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows, X360, PS3	3		France
Ganbare Goemon: Mononoke Dochū Tobidase Nabe Bu...	1999	Konami	Konami	RPG	Fantasy	Sōtarō Tojima, Takeshi Iwakiri	M,M	2	GBC	1	Ganbare Goemon	Japan
Ganbare Goemon: Tengu-to no Gyakushū!	1999	Konami	Konami	RPG	Fantasy				GBC	1	Ganbare Goemon	Japan

Gangland	2004	Whiptail Interactive	MediaMobs	Simulation, Strategy, Action RPG	Modern, Crime	Thomas Finn	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2		Denmark
Gangsters 2	2003	Endo	Herthouses Creations	Strategy, RPG	Historical, Crime	Richard Webb, David R. Punshon	M,M	2	Windows	3		USA
Gates of Skeldal	1998	Napoleon Games	Napoleon Games	RPG	Fantasy				DOS, Windows, Android, iOS	4		Czech Republic
GearHead	2002	GearHead RPG	GearHead RPG	RPG	Anime, Cyberpunk, Post-Apocalyptic, Sci-Fi				Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		USA
Gekkeju Online	2003	Coolhouse	MMORPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		Finland
Gene Troopers	2005	Akella	Cauldron Ltd.	Action RPG	Sci-Fi				Windows, PS2, Xbox	3		Slovakia
Generforge	2003	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy	Jeff Vogel	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Generforge 2	2003	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy				Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Generforge 3	2005	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy				Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Generforge 4: Rebellion	2006	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy	Rijm A. Lynne	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Generforge 5: Overthrow	2008	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Fantasy				Mac OS X, Windows	2		USA
Generation of Chaos	2005	WS America, Midas Interactive Entertainment	Idea Factory	Turn Based Strategy, Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Masataka Matsutoya, Kenji Kaneko, Kenichi Kikkawa	M,M,M	3	PSP, Android	2		Japan
Generation of Chaos Exceed: Yami no Miko Rose			Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Fantasy				Gamecube	1		Japan
Generation of Chaos III: Toki no Fusuin	2003	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Toru Kobayashi, Ryuji Iuchi, Kenji Kaneko, Naoya Doi, Kouji Gotou	M,M,M,M,M	5	PS2	1		Japan
Generation of Chaos IV	2004	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Toru Kobayashi, Ataru Sumiyoshi, Mari Sakaki	M,M,F	3	PS2	1		Japan
Generation of Chaos Next (Generation of Chaos II)	2002	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi				PS2	1		Japan
Generation of Chaos V	2005	Idea Factory	Neverland	Turn Based Strategy, Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Kenji Kaneko	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Genji: Dawn of the Samurai	2005	Sony Computer Entertainment	Game Republic Inc.	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tomotsu Kikuchi, Seichi Negi	M,M	2	PS2	1		Japan
Genji: Days of the Blade	2006	Sony Computer Entertainment	Game Republic Inc.	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yasuharu Takamashi	M	1	PS3	1		Japan
Genso Sukoden Card Stories	2001	Konami	Konami	Card-based RPG	Anime, Fantasy				GBA	1		Japan
Genso Sukogaiden Volume 2: Duel at the Crystal Valley	2001	Konami	Konami	Adventure, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Miki Higashino	F	1	PS1	1		Japan
Geonyeo-ui Gsadan - Gloria In Excelsis Deo	2005	Byulbram Creature	Byulbram Creature	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		South Korea
Geonyeo-ui Gsadan - Her Knights	2000	Byulbram Creature	Byulbram Creature	RPG	Fantasy				Windows, GP32	2		South Korea
GhostBlood	2003	WRF Studios	WRF Studios	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		USA
Gilgipia	2003	Nintendo	skip	Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	Hirofumi Taniguchi, Youssei Obitsum	M,M	2	Gamecube	1		Japan
Giten Megami Tensei: Tokyo Mokushiroku	1997	ASCII Corp	Atlus	RPG	Post-apocalyptic, Sci-Fi, Cyberpunk	Tsukasa Masuko	M	1	Windows, PC-98	2		Japan
Gladus	2003	LucasArts, Activision	LucasArts	Tactical RPG	Historical, Fantasy	Mark Ginsley	M	1	Xbox, PS2, Gamecube	3		USA
Global Folklore	2001	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Fantasy				PS2	1		Japan
Gods & Heroes: Rome Rising	2011	Heatwave Interactive	Heatwave Interactive, Perpetual Entertainment	MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy				Windows	1		USA
GODS: Lands of Infinity	2006	Strategy First Inc.	Cyprien Studios	RPG	Fantasy	Pavel Krychalek	M	1	Windows	1		Slovakia
GodsWar Online	2009	IGG	IGG	MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Goonam: Biken Jidai Katsugeki	2000	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Tomooki Hirono, Hajime Takai	M,M	2	PS2	1		Japan
Golden Sun	2001	Nintendo	Camelot	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	GBA	1		Japan
Golden Sun: The Lost Age	2002	Nintendo	Capcom	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	GBA	1		Japan
Gooka: The Mystery of Janatri	2004	Canega Publishing	Centauri Production	RPG, Adventure	Fantasy	Tomáš Horák, Martin Novák	M,M	2	Windows	1		Czech Republic
Gorassul: The Legacy of the Dragon	2001	JoWood Productions	Silver Style	RPG	Fantasy	Andreas Meyer, Giovanni Vindigni	M,M	2	Windows	1		Germany
Gothic	2001	JoWood Productions	Piranha Bytes	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kai Rosenkranz	M	1	Windows	1		Germany
Gothic 4: Arcania	2010	Dreamcatcher Games	Spellbound Entertainment, Black Forest Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Dynamedion	X	1	Windows, X360	2		Germany
Gothic II	2003	JoWood Productions	Piranha Bytes	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kai Rosenkranz	M	1	Windows	1		Germany
Gothic III	2006	JoWood Entertainment, Deep Silver, Aspyr Media	Piranha Bytes	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kai Rosenkranz	M	1	Windows	1		Germany
Graffiti Kingdom	2004	HOT-B USA	Taito Corporation, Garaku Studio	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yasunori Mitsuuda	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Granado Espada	2007	HanbitSoft, Hanbit Ubiquitous, T3Fun, EuroGamez, IAHGames, Wayi, Kingworld, Asiasoft, LytoGame, Elephant Entertainment	IMC Games	MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy	soundTEMP, Chamu Kubota, S.F.A, Junsung Kim	X,M,X,M	4	Windows	1		South Korea
Grand Chase	2003	KOG Studios	Netmarble, Aiasoft, Nexon, Gamania, SG Interactive, Level Up!, Megacore, KIll3-Combo, Areso5	Action, MMORPG	Anime, Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Grand Fantasia	2008	Aeria Games	K-Legend	MMORPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Grandia	1997	Game Arts Co	Game Arts Co	RPG	Fantasy	Noriyuki Iwadare	M	1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita, Saturn, Android	6		Japan
Grandia II	2000	Sega, Enix, Ubisoft	Game Arts	RPG	Fantasy	Noriyuki Iwadare	M	1	Dreamcast, PS2, Windows	3		Japan
Grandia III	2005	Square Enix	Game Arts	RPG	Fantasy	Noriyuki Iwadare	M	1	PS2	2		Japan
Grandia Xtreme	2002	Enix	Game Arts	RPG	Fantasy	Noriyuki Iwadare	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Grandia: Digital Museum	1998	ESP Software	Game Arts Co	RPG	Fantasy	Noriyuki Iwadare	M	1	Saturn	1		Japan
Grandia: Parallel Trippers	2000	Hudson Soft	Game Arts	RPG	Fantasy	Noriyuki Iwadare	M	1	GBC	1		Japan
Gravity Rush	2012	Sony Computer Entertainment	Project Siren, Blueprint Games	Adventure, Action RPG	Fantasy	Kōhei Tanaka	M	1	PS Vita, PS4	2		Japan
GREEED: Black Border	2009	Headup Games	ClockStone Softwareentwicklung	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Henning Sommer	M	1	Windows	1		Germany
GRQM: Terror in Tibet!	2002	CDV Software	Rebelmind	RPG	Historical, Fantasy	Jarobaw Swiatliski	M	1	Windows	1		Poland
Groove Adventure Rave: Yousai no Kizuna	2002	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy				PS1	1		Japan
Grotesque Tactics II: Dungeons & Donuts	2011	Headup Games	Silent Dreams Gbr	RPG	Fantasy	Kai Walter	M	1	Windows	1		Germany
Grotesque Tactics: Evil Heroes	2010	Silent Dreams Gbr	Silent Dreams Gbr	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Borislaw Slavov, Kai Walter, Nicolas C. Lewentorp	M,M,M	3	Windows	1		Germany
Growlanser	1999	Atlus	Career Soft	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Noriyuki Iwadare	M	1	PS1	1		Japan
Growlanser II: The Sense of Justice	2001	Atlus	Career Soft	RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Fujika	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Growlanser III: The Dual Darkness	2001	Atlus	Career Soft	RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Fujika	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Growlanser IV: Wayfarer of Time	2003	Atlus	Atlus	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Tomoyuki Hamada	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Growlanser VI: Precarious World	2007	Atlus	Career Soft	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kenichi Tsuchiya, Eisuke Seki, Atsushi Kitajoh	M,M,M	3	PS2	1		Japan
Growlanser: Heritage of War	2008	Atlus, Rising Star	Career Soft	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kenichi Tsuchiya, Eisuke Seki	M,M	2	PS2	1		Japan
Guardian's Crusade	1998	Activision	Tamsoft Corporation	RPG	Fantasy	Michihiro Ohmura, Akira Motoyama, Yasuhiro Nakano, Fumio Yatabe, Luna Umegaki	F,M,M,M,F	5	PS1	1		Japan

Icarus: Sanctuary of the Gods	1997	IC Research	KRSoft	RPG	Fantasy	Dino Sound, Sorisaem	X,X	2	Windows	1		South Korea
Icwind Dale	2000	Interplay	Black Isle	RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule	M	1	Windows	2	D&D	USA
Icwind Dale II	2002	Interplay	Black Isle Studios	RPG	Fantasy	Inon Zur	M	1	Windows	1	D&D	USA
Iji	2010	Remar Games	Remar Games	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Christopher Geehan, Daniel Byrne-McCullough, Tom Maurtzen	M,M,M	3	Windows	1		Sweden
Ikusa Megami	1999	Eushully	Eushully	RPG	Fantasy	Izumi Morino	F	1	Windows	1	Ikusa Megami	Japan
Ikusa Megami II: Ushinawareshi Kioku e no Chink...	2002	Eushully	Eushully	RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows	2	Ikusa Megami	Japan
Ikusa Megami Zero (Battle Goddess Zero)	2008	Eushully	Eushully	RPG	Fantasy	CHOR, Chizuko Moriai	X,F	2	Windows	1	Ikusa Megami	Japan
Inasuma Eleven	2008	Level-5 Inc.	Level-5 Inc.	Sports, RPG	Anime, Modern	Yasunori Mitsuda, Tooru Yamaaki, Hiroshi Yamaaki	M,M,M	3	Nintendo DS, iOS	2		Japan
Incubation: Time Is Running Out	1997	Blue Byte	Blue Byte	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Hanko Ruttman	M	1	Windows	1		Germany
Infamous	2009	Sony Computer Entertainment	Sucker Punch Productions	Adventure, Action RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Amon Tobin, Jim Dooley, Mel Wesson, Jonathan Mayer	M,M,F,M	4	PS3	2	Infamous	USA
Infestation: Survivor Stories (The War Z)	2012	OP Productions	Hammerpoint Interactive	Survival Horror, MMORPG	Horror				Windows	1		USA
Infinite Space	2010	Sega	Nude Maker, Platinum Games	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Masamichi Amano	M	1	Nintendo DS	1		Japan
Infinite Undiscovery	2009	Square Enix	Tri-Ace	Action RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	X360	1		Japan
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	2006	Marvelous Interactive, Natsume, Rising Star Games	ArtePiazza	RPG, Simulation	Fantasy				PSP	1	Harvest Moon	Japan
Innocent Tears	2002	Kobi	Global A	RPG, Strategy	Anime, Sci-Fi				Xbox	1		Japan
Inuyasha: Secret of the Divine Jewel	2007	Namco Bandai	Art Co, Frontier Groove	RPG	Fantasy	Tsutomu Fuzawa	M	1	Nintendo DS	1	Inuyasha	Japan
Inuyasha: The Secret of the Cursed Mask	2004	Bandai	Bandai	RPG	Fantasy	Akihito Juichiya, Takako Ochiai	M,M	2	PS2	1		Japan
Invictus: In the Shadow of Olympus	2000	Interplay Entertainment	Quicksilver Software	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Richard Band	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Istaria: Chronicles of the Gifted	2003	Atari	Artifact Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy	Michael Peter	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Izumo	2001	Studio Ego	Studio Ego	RPG	Fantasy	Tomoo Kasahara (PYON-MO), Yuko Anzai	F,F	2	Windows	1	Izumo	Japan
Izumo 2	2004	Studio Ego	Studio Ego	RPG	Modern, Anime, Fantasy	Tomoo Kasahara (PYON-MO), Yuko Anzai	F,F	2	Windows	2	Izumo	Japan
Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja	2007	Success, Atlus, SOS Games	Success, NinjaStudio	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Katsuke Oku	M	1	Nintendo DS	1	Izuna	Japan
Jade Cocoon 2	2003	Genki, Ubisoft	Genki	RPG, Monster Raising	Fantasy	Kimitaka Matsumae, Manami Matsumae	M,F	2	PS2	1	Jade Cocoon	Japan
Jade Cocoon: Story of the Tamamayu	1998	Genki Co.	Genki Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Kimitaka Matsumae	M	1	PS1, PS3, PSP, PS Vita	4	Jade Cocoon	Japan
Jade Dynasty	2008	Perfect World Entertainment	Beijing Perfect World	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	2		China
Jade Empire	2005	Microsoft Game Studios	Bioware	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jack Wall	M	1	Windows, Xbox, X360	3		Canada
Jagged Alliance 2	1999	Topware Interactive	Sirtech Canada	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Kevin Manthei	M	1	Windows, Linux	2	Jagged Alliance	Canada
Jeune dame	2006	Sony Computer Entertainment	Level-5	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Takeshi Inoue	M	1	PSP	1		Japan
Jian zhi Han	1999	Zhenggu Software	Zhenggu Software	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	2		China
Journey's End	2001	Crystal Interactive Software	Bright Line Productions	Action RPG	Fantasy	David L. McLean, Andy Riley, Scott Zarchy	M,M,M	3	Windows	1		USA
Kagero: Deception II	1998	Tecmo Ltd	Tecmo Ltd	Strategy, RPG	Horror	Sugito Miyashiro, Masaaki Udagawa, Ayako Toyoda	M,M,F	3	PS1, PS3, PSP, PS Vita	4	Kagero	Japan
Kal Online	2004	Nissoft	Nissoft	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Karakureno Battle Monster Tactics	2000	Nintendo	Spiral	Tactical RPG	Fantasy				GBC	1		Japan
Karas Returns	2009	GamesCampus, OnNet	OnNet	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Kartia: The World of Fate	1998	Atlus Software	Atlus Co	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Kenichi Tsuchiya, Masaki Kurokawa	M,M	2	PS1	1		Japan
Kasen Monogatari	1998	ASCII Corp	Japan Vitec	RPG	Sci-Fi	Kohel Tanaka, Hiroki Otsomo	M,M	2	PS1	1	Kasen Monogatari	Japan
Keep of the Lich-Lord	2012	Megara Entertainment	Megara Entertainment	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	Fauz Nabheerboos	M	1	iOS	1		France
Keitai Denji Telefang 2: Power Version	2002	Natsume	Smilesoft	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi				GBA	1	Keitai Denji	Japan
Keitai Denji Telefang 2: Speed Version	2002	Natsume	Smilesoft	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi				GBA	1	Keitai Denji	Japan
Keitai Denji Telefang: Power Version	2000	Natsume	Smilesoft	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi				GBC	1	Keitai Denji	Japan
Keitai Denji Telefang: Speed Version	2000	Natsume	Smilesoft	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi				GBC	1	Keitai Denji	Japan
Khanral	2000	Namco	Alpha Unit, TamTam	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Tomohiro Nishimura	M	1	PS1	1		Japan
Kikou Seki Unitron	2000	Yumekobo	Yumekobo	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy				NGP Color	1		Japan
King Arthur II: The Role-Playing Wargame	2012	Paradox Interactive AB	Neocoregames	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Gergely Buttinger	M	1	Windows	2	King Arthur	Hungary
King Arthur: The Role-playing Wargame	2009	Neocoregames	Neocoregames	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Gergely Buttinger	M	1	Windows	1	King Arthur	Hungary
King of Dragon Pass	1999	A Sharp	A Sharp	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Stan LePard	M	1	Android	4		USA
King's Bounty: Legions	2011	Nival Inc	Krank Productions	Tactical RPG	Fantasy				Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, Android, iOS, Windows Phone, Browser-based	7	King's Bounty	Russia
Kingdom Hearts	2002	Squaresoft	Square	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F	1	PS2	1	Kingdom Hearts	Japan
Kingdom Hearts 3D: Dream Drop Distance	2012	Square Enix	Square Enix	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura, Takeharu Ishimoto, Tsuyoshi Sekito	F,M,M	3	3DS, PS4	2	Kingdom Hearts	Japan
Kingdom Hearts Birth of Sleep	2010	Square Enix	Square Enix	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura, Tsuyoshi Sekito, Takeharu Ishimoto	F,M,M	3	PSP, PS3	2	Kingdom Hearts	Japan
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	2013	Square Enix	Square Enix	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F	1	PS3	1	Kingdom Hearts	Japan
Kingdom Hearts II	2005	Square Enix, Buena Vista	Square Enix	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F	1	PS2	1	Kingdom Hearts	Japan
Kingdom Hearts Re-coded	2011	Square Enix	Square Enix, h.a.n.d.	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F	1	Nintendo DS	1	Kingdom Hearts	Japan
Kingdom Hearts: 358/2 Days	2009	Square Enix	Square Enix, h.a.n.d.	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F	1	Nintendo DS	1	Kingdom Hearts	Japan
Kingdom Hearts: Birth by Sleep	2010	Square Enix, Ubisoft	Square Enix	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura, Tsuyoshi Sekito, Takeharu Ishimoto	F,M,M	3	PSP	1	Kingdom Hearts	Japan
Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories	2004	Square Enix	Jupiter, Square Enix	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F	1	GBA, PS2, PS3	3	Kingdom Hearts	Japan
Kingdom of Paradise (Key of Heaven)	2009	Sony Computer Entertainment	Climax	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tetsuo Ishikawa, Yoshifumi Iio	M,M	2	PSP	1		Japan
Kingdom Under Fire: Circle of Doom	2007	Microsoft	Blueside	Action RPG	Fantasy				X360	1	Kingdom Under Fire	South Korea
Kingdom Under Fire: The Crusaders	2004	Microsoft	Phantagram Co.	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Chuck Mitchell, Ken Gien, Peter Taylor, Deadpan	M,M,M,X	4	Xbox	1	Kingdom Under Fire	South Korea
Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning	2012	EA	3D Studios, Big Huge Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Grant Kirkhope, Mark Cramer	M,M	2	Windows, X360, PS3	2		USA
King's Bounty: Armored Princess	2010	1C Company	Katauri Interactive	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Lind Erebros, Trilhorn Productions	M,X	2	Windows, Mac OS X	2	King's Bounty	Russia
King's Bounty: Legions	2013	Nival	Krank Productions	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy				Windows, Windows Phone, Browser-based, Mac OS X, Android, iOS	6	King's Bounty	Russia
King's Bounty: The Legend	2008	1C Company	Katauri	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Lind Erebros, Mihail Kostilyev, Andrey Gladkov, Anastasia Pavlova, Victor Krasnokutsky	M,M,M,F,M	5	Windows	2	King's Bounty	Russia
King's Bounty: The Legend	2008	1C Company	Katauri Interactive	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Lind Erebros & Trilhorn Productions	M,X	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2	King's Bounty	Russia

King's Field: The Ancient City	2001	AgeTec	FromSoftware	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tsukasa Saitō	M	1	PS2	1	King's Field	Japan
King's Quest: Mask of Eternity	1998	Sierra On-Line	Sierra On-Line	Action RPG	Fantasy	Ben Hooge, Kevin Mantheis, Mark Seibert	M,M,M	3	Windows	2	King's Quest	USA
Kinnikuman Nisei: Chōjin Seisenshi	2003	Bandai	Bandai	RPG	Anime, Modern				Wonderswan Color	1		Japan
Kinnikuman Second Generation: Choujin Seisenshi	2003	Bandai	Bandai	RPG	Modern, Fantasy, Anime				Wonderswan Color	1	Kinnikuman	Japan
Klonoa Heroes: Densetsu no Star Medal	2002	Namco Limited	Namco Limited	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Yoshinori Kawamoto, Yuji Masubuchi, Kanako Kalino	M,M,F	3	GBA	1		Japan
Knight Online	2004	Mgame, eGames, X-legend, NTTGame	Mgame, Noahsystem	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Knights in the Nightmare	2008	Sting, Atlas	Sting	RTS, RPG	Fantasy	Shigeki Hayashi	M	1	PSP, Nintendo DS	2	Dept. Heaven	Japan
Knights of Honor	2004	Paradox Interactive AB	Black Sea Studios	Simulation, Strategy, RPG	Historical, War	B.S. Glorian	M	1	Windows	1		Bulgaria
Knights of the Temple II	2005	Playlogic	Cauldon	Action RPG	Fantasy	Čubomír Ruttkay	M	1	Windows, PS2, Xbox	3	Knights of the Temple	Slovakia
Knights of the Temple: Infernal Crusade	2004	TDR	Starbreeze	Action RPG	Fantasy	Gustaf Grefberg	M	1	Xbox, PS2, Gamecube	3	Knights of the Temple	Sweden
Knock knock	2013	Ice-pick Lodge	Ice-pick Lodge	RPG, Puzzle	Horror				Windows, PSN, PS4	1		USA
Konung 2: Blood of Titans	2003	Got Game Entertainment LLC, Menscom LLC	IC Company	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		Russia
Koto Battle: Tengai no Moribito	2001	AlphaDream	AlphaDream	Card-based RPG	Anime, Fantasy				GBC, 3DS	2		Japan
Koudelka	1999	Infogrames	Sacnoth	RPG	Horror	Hiroki Kikuta	M	1	PS1	1		Japan
Kowloon Yōma Gakuen Ki	2004	Atlus	Shout! Designworks Co.	Strategy, Adventure, RPG	Modern, Fantasy				PS2	1	Kowloon Yōma	Japan
KrabbitWorld Labyrinth	2006	KrabbitSoft Studios	KrabbitSoft Studios	Action RPG	Cyberpunk, Fantasy				Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		Canada
Krakox the Barbarian	2001	Asymmetric Publications	Asymmetric Publications	RPG	Fantasy				Browser-based	1		USA
Krater	2012	Fatshark	Fatshark	RPG, Real Time Strategy	Sci-Fi	Christian Gabel	M	1	Windows	1		Sweden
Krater: Shadows over Solide	2012	Fatshark AB	Fatshark AB	Action RPG	Post-Apocalyptic	Christian Gabel	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2		Sweden
Kudos 2	2008	Posttech Computing	Posttech Computing	Simulation, Strategy, RPG	Modern	Jesse Hopkins	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Kudos	UK
Kult: Heretic Kingdoms	2005	Got Game	3D People	RPG	Fantasy	Sean Kolton	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2		Sweden
Kuroi Hitomi no Noah: Cielgris Fantasm	1999	Gust Co.	Gust Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Daisuke Achikawa	M	1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4	Kuroi Hitomi	Japan
L.O.L.: Lack of Love	2000	ASCII Entertainment	Love de-Lic	Adventure, RPG, Strategy	Fantasy	Ryuichi Sakamoto	M	1	Dreamcast	1		Japan
La Prison	2000	Dinamic Multimedia	Dinamic Multimedia	MMORPG, Action	Modern	Sebastian Comego	M	1	Windows	2	La Prison	Spain
La Pucelle: Tactics	2002	Nippon Ichi, Masloff, Koei	Nippon Ichi	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Tempei Sato	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
La Tèle	2006	Actoz Soft, OGPlanet, Gamepot, Shanda, GameFactory	Actoz Soft	MMORPG	Anime, Fantasy	be, DINY, Electronic Boutique, ESTI, INID, Jo, MZU, Nienl, Silhouetti, ASTRO MAN	F,T,M,M,F,7,7,M,M,M,M,7	10	Windows	1		South Korea
Lands of Lore III	1999	EA	Westwood	Action RPG	Fantasy	David Arkenstone, Frank Klepacki	M,M	2	Windows	2	Lands of Lore	USA
Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny	1997	Virgin Interactive Entertainment	Westwood Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	David Arkenstone, Frank Klepacki	M,M	2	DOS	1	Lands of Lore	USA
Landfeud de Troy	2007	Atari	Visual Impact	Action RPG	Fantasy	Will Loconto	M	1	Nintendo DS	1		France
Langrisser IV	1997	Masaya	Career Soft	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Noriyuki Iwadare, Makoto Asai, Yūichirō Honda	M,M,M	3	Saturn	1	Langrisser	Japan
Langrisser Millennium	1999	Masaya	NCS Corp	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Akitatsu Saito, Ryo Ogura	M,M	2	Dreamcast, Wonderswan	2	Langrisser	Japan
Langrisser V: The End of Legend	1998	Masaya	Career Soft	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Noriyuki Iwadare	M	1	Saturn	1	Langrisser	Japan
Larx Mortus	2008	Rake in Grass	Rake in Grass	Action RPG	Horror	Borislav Slavov, Victor Stoyanov	M,M	2	Windows, Mac OS X	2		Czech Republic
Last Chaos	2005	Gamigo, Aeria Games & Entertainment	T-Entertainment Co	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Last Imperial Prince	1997	NEC Home Electronics	Nihon Application	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows, PC-FX	2		Japan
Last Rebellion	2010	Nippon Ichi, NIS America, Tecmo Koei	Nippon Ichi, Hit Maker Inc.	RPG	Fantasy	Noriyasu Agematsu	M	1	PS3	1		Japan
Lexus Force	2008	Aldorlea Games	Aldorlea Games	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Lexus Power	USA
Legia 2: Duel Saga	2001	Eidos Interactive, Sony Computer Entertainment	Prokon	RPG	Fantasy	Hitoshi Sakimoto, Yasunori Mitsuda, Michiru Oshima	M,M,F	3	PS2	1	Legia	Japan
Legislata	2012	Nippon Ichi	System Prima	Dungeon Crawler, Action RPG	Fantasy				PS3, PSN	2		Japan
Legend of Grimrock	2012	Almost Human Ltd.	Almost Human Ltd.	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jarno "Stakula" Sarkula	M	1	Windows	1	Legend of Grimrock	Finland
Legend of Legaia	1998	SCE	Contrail	RPG	Fantasy	Michiru Oshima, Kohei Tanaka	F,M	2	PS1	1		Japan
Legend of Mana	1999	Square	Square	RPG	Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F	1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4	Mana series	Japan
Legend of the Cryptids	2012	Applibot	Applibot	Card-based RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Android, iOS	2		Japan
Legend of the North: Konung	1999	Strategy First	IC Company	RPG	Fantasy	Sergey Grigorevsky, Sergey Kopeika, Alexander Shipnevsky	M,M,M	3	Windows	1		Russia
Legend of the River King 2	2001	Natsume	Victor Interactive, Natsume	Monster Raising, RPG	Modern, Fantasy				GBC, 3DS	2	Kawa no Nushi Tsuri	Japan
Legend of the River King GB	1997	Pack-in-Video Co	Tose Co	RPG, Fishing	Fantasy	Yoko Miyata	F	1	GB, GBC	2	Legend of the River	Japan
Legend: Hand of God	2007	Anaconda, ValuSoft, THQ	Master Creating GMBH	Action RPG	Fantasy	Ylvisäki Ilkka, Markus Schmidt, Alexander Röder, Alexander Pfeifer, Pierre Geering Langer	M,M,M,M,M	5	Windows	1		Germany
Legends of Zork	2009	Activision, Jolt Online Gaming	Jolt Online Gaming	RPG	Fantasy				Browser-based	1		Ireland
Legion: The Legend of Excalbur	2002	Midway Games Inc.	7 Studios Inc.	Strategy, Action RPG	Fantasy	Tom Cruise	M	1	PS2	1		USA
Leithian: In the Abyss	1999	Kama Digital Entertainment	Garam & Baram Corp	Action RPG	Fantasy	TeMP, Dam.A	X,X	2	Windows	1		South Korea
Liberal Crime Squad	2004	Bay 12 Games	Bay 12 Games	Simulation, RPG	Modern, Spy, Stealth				Windows, Linux	2		USA
Life of a Wizard	2013	Hosted Games	Mike Walter	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	NO MUSIC			Android, Browser-based, iOS	2		USA
Lil' Monster	1999	AgeTec	KID Corp	RPG	Fantasy				GBC	1		Japan
Lineage II: The Chaotic Chronicle	2003	Ncsoft, Tencent, Innova	Ncsoft	MMORPG	Fantasy	Bill Brown	M	1	Windows	1	Lineage	South Korea
Lineage: The Blood Pledge	2001	Ncsoft	Ncsoft	MMORPG, Action	Fantasy	Joey Newman, Jimwoo Ahn	M,M	2	Windows, Mac OS X	2		South Korea
Lionheart: Legacy of the Crusader	2003	Interplay	Reflexive, Black Isle	Action RPG	Alternate Reality, Fantasy	Inon Zur	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Little Princess: Mari Ōkoku no Ningyō Hime 2	1999	Nippon Ichi	Nippon Ichi	RPG	Fantasy	Tempei Sato	M	1	PS1	1	Mari Kingdom	Japan
Loki: Heroes of Mythology	2007	Focus Home, Crimson Cow	Cyanide	Action RPG	Fantasy	Soundakt	X	1	Windows	1		France
Long Live the Queen	2013	Hanako Games	Hanako Games	Adventure, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	gierrottunare, Kaminazuki, Kana's Sound Factory	M,M,X	3	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		UK
Lord of Arcana	2010	Square Enix	Access Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Nobuo Uematsu, Satoshi Hemmi	M,M	2	PSP	1	Lord of Arcana	Japan
Lord of the Rings: War in the North	2011	Warner Bros. Interactive	Snowblind Studios, Feral Interactive	Action RPG, Hack and Slash	Fantasy	Inon Zur	M	1	Windows, X360, PS3	3	Lord of the Rings	USA
Lords of EverQuest	2003	Sony Online Entertainment	Rapid Eye Entertainment	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Robert King	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Lost in Blue	2005	Konami	Konami	RPG	Modern				Vertendo DS	2	Lost in Blue	Japan
Lost in Blue 3	2008	Konami	Hudson Soft Company, Matrix Software	RPG, Puzzle	Modern	In Geer Music, Stephen Geering	X,M	2	3DS	1	Lost in Blue	Japan
Lost in Blue: Shipwrecked	2008	Konami	Hudson Soft Company, Studio ZAN Co.	RPG, Puzzle	Modern	Hirohito Inoue	M	1	Wii	1	Lost in Blue	Japan

Lost Kingdoms	2002	Activision	FromSoftware	Card Based, Action RPG	Fantasy	Kota Hoshino	M		1	Gamecube	1	Lost Kingdoms	Japan
Lost Kingdoms II	2003	Activision	FromSoftware	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kota Hoshino	M		2	Gamecube	2	Lost Kingdoms	USA
Lost Odyssey	2007	Microsoft	Mistwalker, feelplus	RPG	Fantasy	Nobuo Uematsu	M		1	X360	1		Japan
LostMagic	2006	Taito, Ubisoft	Taito, Garakuta	RTS, RPG	Fantasy	Norihito Furukawa	M		1	Nintendo DS	1		Japan
Love	2010	Quelstar	Quelstar	MMORPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		Sweden
Lu Bu Yu Diao Chan	2003	Soft-World	Soft-World	RPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		China
Lucent Heart	2008	Suba Games	Gamania	MMORPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		China
Lufia: Curse of the Sinistrals	2010	Natsume Inc.	Neverland	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yasunori Shiono	M		1	Nintendo DS	1	Lufia	Japan
Lufia: The Legend Returns	2003	Taito, Natsume, Ubisoft	Neverland	RPG	Fantasy	Yasunori Shiono, Akiko Ishibashi, Tomoko Morita, Yukio Nakajima	M,F,M,M		4	GB	1	Lufia	Japan
Lufia: The Ruins of Lore	2002	Taito, Atlus	Taito	RPG	Fantasy	Yasunori Shiono	M		1	GBA	1	Lufia	Japan
Luminary: Rise of the Goonzu	2009	nDoors	NNN Games	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		1	Windows	1		South Korea
Luminous Arc	2007	Marvelous, Atlus, Rising Star	Imageepoch	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Akari Kaida, Kazumi Mitome, Shota Kageyama, Yasunori Mitsuda	F,F,M,M		4	Nintendo DS	1	Luminous Arc	Japan
Luminous Arc 2 Will	2008	Marvelous	Imageepoch	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Akari Kaida, Shunsuke Tsuchiya, Yoko Shimomura, Yoshino Aoki	F,M,F,F		4	Nintendo DS	1	Luminous Arc	Japan
Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	1998	Kadokawa Shoten	Game Arts Co	RPG	Fantasy	Noriyuki Iwadare	M		1	Saturn	1	Lunar	Japan
Lunar Legend	2002	Ubisoft	Japan Art Media Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Noriyuki Iwadare	M		1	GBA	1	Lunar	Japan
Lunar: Dragon Song	2005	Marvelous, Ubisoft, Rising Star	Japan Art Media	RPG	Fantasy	Masaaki Honma, Junzo Yagami, Yoshiaki Kubotera, Yoshifumi Iwata	M,M,M,M		4	Nintendo DS	1		Japan
Lunar: Silver Star Harmony	2009	GungHo, Xseed Games	Game Arts	RPG	Fantasy	Noriyuki Iwadare	M		1	PSP	1	Lunar	Japan
Lunar: Record of Lunia War	2008	Nexon	Nexon	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		Japan
Madlogi	2004	Nexon Korea	devCAT	MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy		X		1	Windows	1		South Korea
Madō Monogatari	1998	SEGA	Compile	RPG	Fantasy	Koji Ohari, Kō Hayashi, Daisuke Nagata, Shigeharu Imano, Keita Haga	M,M,M,M,M		5	Saturn	1	Madō Monogatari	Japan
Maestri	2009	Aeria Games	Noc Works	MMORPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		Japan
Mage Knight: Apocalypse	2006	Namco	InterServ	Action RPG	Fantasy	Billy Wierzbicki	M		1	Windows	1	Mage Knight	USA
Magbane 2	2002	Instant Kingdom	Instant Kingdom	RPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		Finland
Magi Nation	2003	Epoch	Interactive Imagination	RPG, Monster Raising	Fantasy	Jerry Lim	M		1	GB	1		USA
MAGi: Magical Strategy Game	2007	TreGee	TreGee	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Rob Westwood	M		1	Windows	1		Poland
Magic & Mayhem	1998	Bethesda	Mythos Games	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Simon Emerson, Martin Russell, Afro Celt Sound System	M,M,X		3	Windows	1	Magic & Mayhem	UK
Magic & Mayhem 2: The Art of Magic	2003	Virgin Interactive, Bethesda	Climax, Charybdis	RPG, RTS	Fantasy	Jim Croft	M		1	Windows	1	Magic & Mayhem	USA
Magic & Mayhem: The Art of Magic	2003	Bethesda Softworks	Charybdis Limited, Climax Nottingham	RPG, Strategy	Fantasy	Jim Croft	M		1	Windows	1		UK
Magi: Pengl: The Quest for Color	2003	Taito, Agente	Garakuta Studio, Taito	RPG	Fantasy	Tamayo Zuntata, Sayoko Zuntata	M,F		2	PS2	1		Japan
Magical Drop F	1999	Data East Corp	Sakata SAS Co	RPG, Puzzle	Fantasy	Masaaki Iwasaki, Tatsuya Kiuchi, Hiroaki Yoshida, Yoko Suzuki	M,M,M,M,M		4	PS1,PSP,PS3	1	Magical Drop	Japan
Magical Land	2009	Shanda	Shanda	Fantasy	Fantasy					Windows	1	The Genesis of the Century	China
Magical StarSign	2006	Nintendo	Brownie Brown	RPG	Fantasy	Tsukasa Masuko	M		1	Nintendo DS	1	Magical StarSign	Japan
Magical Vacation	2002	Nintendo	Brownie Brown	Adventure, RPG	Anime, Fantasy					GBA, Wii U	2		Japan
Magician's Academy	2007	Enterbrain	Enterbrain	Tactical RPG	Modern, Fantasy					PS2	1		Japan
Magna Carta: Crimson Stigmata	2004	Bangresto, Atlus, 505	Softmax	RPG	Fantasy	Sung-Woon Jang	M		1	PS2	1	Magna Carta	Japan
Magna Carta: Tears of Blood	2004	Atlus	Softmax Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Sung-Woon Jang	M		1	PS2	1	Magna Carta	South Korea
Magna Carta: The Phantom of Avalanche	2003	Softmax Co.	Softmax Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Sung-Woon Jang, Sang-Ho Lee, Hyung-Woo Noh	M,M,M		3	Windows	1	Magna Carta	South Korea
Majesty: The Fantasy Kingdom sim	2000	Hasbro	Cyberlore	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Kevin Manthey	M		1	Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Majikko Datasuken: Little witching mischiefs	1999	Bandai	Toys for Bob	Strategy, Action RPG	Fantasy	Yasuyuki Konno	M		1	PS1	1		Japan
Makai Kingdom: Chronicles of the Sacred Tome	2005	Nippon Ichi	Nippon Ichi	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Ayako Sato, Hiroshi Takaki, Hiroto Saito, Hyo Sakai, Takayuki Nakahara, Toshiya Terashima, Tsuyoshi Kaneko, Tenpei Satō	F,M,M,M,M,M,M,M		8	PS2	1		Japan
Makurall Makendō 2	1998	NEC Home Electronics	Fill in Café Co, Sugrui Ltd	RPG	Fantasy, Modern	Toshirō Mitsutani	M		1	PC-FX	1		Japan
Manamanyo	2003	Alice	Alice	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Shade, DragonAttack	M,X		2	Windows	1		Japan
Mana Khemia 2	2008	Gust, Nippon Ichi	Gust	RPG	Fantasy	Ken Nakagawa, Daisuke Achiwa	M,M		2	PS2	1	Mana Khemia	Japan
Mana Khemia: Alchemists of Al-Reis	2007	Gust, Nippon Ichi	Gust	RPG	Fantasy	Ken Nakagawa, Daisuke Achiwa	M,M		2	PS2	1	Mana Khemia	Japan
Mana Khemia: Alchemists of Al-Reis	2008	NIS America	Gust Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Ken Nakagawa, Daisuke Achiwa	M,M		2	PS2, PSP	2	Atelier	Japan
MapleStory	2003	Nexon, Shanda, AsiaSoft, Gamania, Level Up!	Wizet	MMORPG	Fantasy	soundTEMP	X		1	Windows	1		South Korea
Marica: Shinjitsu no Sekai	1997	Victor Interactive Software	Victor Interactive Software	RPG	Modern, paranormal	Toshiyuki O'mori, Yoko Takahashi	M,F		2	Saturn	1	Shinjitsu	Japan
Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story	2009	Nintendo	AlphaDream	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F		1	Nintendo DS	1	Mario Bros	Japan
Mario & Luigi: Dream Team	2013	Nintendo	AlphaDream	RPG	Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F		1	3DS	1	Mario Bros	Japan
Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time	2005	Nintendo	AlphaDream	RPG	Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F		1	Nintendo DS	1	Mario Bros	Japan
Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga	2003	Nintendo	AlphaDream	RPG	Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F		1	GBA	1	Mario Bros	Japan
Mario Golf	1999	Nintendo	Camelot Software	Sports, Action RPG	Sports	Motoi Sakuraba	M		1	GB	1	Mario	Japan
Mario Golf: Advance Tour	2004	Nintendo	Camelot Software Planning	RPG, Sports	Modern, Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M		1	GBA, Wii U	2	Mario Bros	Japan
Mario Tennis: Power Tour	2005	Nintendo	Camelot Software Planning	Sports, Action RPG	Modern, Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M		1	GBA	1	Mario Bros	Japan
Mars: War Logs	2013	Focus Home Interactive	Spiders	RPG	Sci-Fi	Sylvain Prunier	M		1	Windows, X360, PS3	1		France
Marvel Puzzle Quest	2013	d3 Publisher	Demiurge Studios	RPG, Puzzle	Superheroes	Rod Abernethy	M		1	Windows, iOS, Android	1	Puzzle Quest	USA
Marvel: Avengers Alliance	2013	Playdom	Playdom	RPG	Superheroes					Android, Browser-based, iOS	1		USA
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	2006	Activision	Raven	Action RPG	Superheroes	Mark Ginsley, Chance Thomas, Cris Velasco	M,M,M		3	Windows	1	Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	USA
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2 - Fusion	2009	Activision	Vicarious Visions, Savage, n-Space	Action RPG	Superheroes	Trevor Morris	M		1	Windows, X360, PS3, PS2, Wii	1	Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	USA
Mass Effect	2007	Microsoft, EA	Bioware	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Jack Wall, Sam Hulick, Richard Jacques, David Kates	M,M,M,M		4	Windows, X360, PS3, Wii U	4	Mass Effect	Canada
Mass Effect 2	2010	EA	Bioware	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Jack Wall, Jimmy Minson, Sam Hulick, David Kates	M,M,M,M		4	Windows, X360, PS3	3	Mass Effect	Canada
Mass Effect 3	2012	EA	Bioware, Straight Right	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Sascha Dikiciyan, Sam Hulick, Chris Lennertz, Clint Mansell, Cris Velasco	M,M,M,M,M		5	Windows, X360, PS3	3	Mass Effect	Canada
Media Heroes: Meikyū Densetsu	2002	Media Entertainment Inc.	Media Entertainment Inc.	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy					PS1	1		Japan
Maze of Space	2010	Kloonigames	Kloonigames	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Niklas Ström	M		1	Windows, Mac OS X	2		Finland
Mazes of Fate	2006	Graffiti Entertainment	Sabaraa	RPG	Fantasy	Juan Linetsky, Santiago Barilatti	M,M		2	GBA, Nintendo DS	2		Argentina

Assembly 3D	1997	Dennis Courtney Five	Dennis Courtney Five	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	NO MUSIC		DOS	1	Mazzeby	USA
Mean Girls: High School Showdown	2009	Paramount Digital Entertainment	Ladybug Digital Media, legacy Interactive	RPG	Modern, High School	Mutate Muzika	M	Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
MechCommander 2	2001	Microsoft	FASA Studio	RPG, Strategy	Sci-Fi	Osamu Decker	M	Windows	1		USA
Medabots: Metabee	2003	Natsume	Natsume	Strategy, Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Kinuyo Yamashita	F	GBA	1	Medabots	Japan
Medabots: Rokusho	2003	Natsume	Natsume	Strategy, Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Kinuyo Yamashita	F	GBA	1	Medabots	Japan
Mega Man Battle Network	2001	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Akari Kaida	F	GBA, Wii U Virtual Console	2	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Battle Network 2	2001	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Akari Kaida	F	GBA, Wii U Virtual Console	2	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Battle Network 3: Blue Version	2002	Capcom	Capcom	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Yoshino Aoki	F	GBA	1	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Battle Network 3: White Version	2002	Capcom	Capcom	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Yoshino Aoki	F	GBA	1	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Colonel	2005	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Akari Kaida	F	GBA, Wii U Virtual Console	2	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team ProtoMan	2004	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Akari Kaida	F	GBA, Wii U Virtual Console	2	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Battle Network 6: Cybeast Falzar	2005	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Yoshino Aoki	F	GBA	1	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Battle Network 6: Cybeast Gragar	2005	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Yoshino Aoki	F	GBA	1	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Legends 2	2000	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Makoto Tomozawa	M	PS1, PSP	2	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Star Force 2: Zerkler X Ninja	2008	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Yoshino Aoki, Mitsuhiro Takano, Marika Suzuki	F,M,F	3 Nintendo DS	1	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Star Force 2: Zerkler X Saurian	2008	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Yoshino Aoki, Mitsuhiro Takano, Marika Suzuki	F,M,F	3 Nintendo DS	1	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Star Force: Dragon	2006	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Yoshino Aoki, Mitsuhiro Takano	F,M	2 Nintendo DS	1	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Star Force: Leo	2006	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Yoshino Aoki, Mitsuhiro Takano	F,M	2 Nintendo DS	1	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man Star Force: Pegasus	2006	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Yoshino Aoki, Mitsuhiro Takano	F,M	2 Nintendo DS	1	Mega Man	Japan
Mega Man X: Command Mission	2004	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Shinya Okada, Yoko Komiya, Seiko Kobuchi	M,F,F	3 PS2, Gamecube	2	Mega Man	Japan
Metal Dungeon	2002	Kicat Interactive	Panther Software	RPG	Sci-Fi			Xbox	1		Japan
Metal Rager Online	2013	JCPanet	JCPanet	MMORPG	Sci-Fi, Horror	Developed Internally	X	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		South Korea
Metal Saga	2005	Atlus	Success Corp.	RPG	Anime, Post-Apocalyptic	Satoshi Kadokura	M	PS2	1		Japan
Metal Sage: Sajn no Kusari	2005	Success, Atlus	Cretech	RPG	Post-apocalyptic	Satoshi Kadokura	M	PS2	1	Metal Max	Japan
Metal Walker	1999	Capcom	Capcom	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi			GBC	1		Japan
Metal Walker	2001	Capcom	Capcom	RPG, Strategy	Anime, Sci-Fi			GBC	1		Japan
Metalheart: Replicants Rampage	2005	DreamCatcher, Akella	Akella, NumLock	Tactical RPG	Post-apocalyptic			Windows	1		Russia
Metsni2	2004	Gameforge 4D	Ymir Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	Windows	1		South Korea
Metropolismania	2001	Natsume	Indi Software Co., Media Factory	RPG, Simulation, Strategy	Anime, Modern			PS2	1	Metropolismania	Japan
Might & Magic: Clash of Heroes	2010	Ubisoft	Capybara Games	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Sean Lohrich	M	Windows, XBOX, PS3, Android, iOS	5	Might and Magic	Canada
Might & Magic: Heroes VI	2011	Ubisoft	Black Hole Entertainment	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Rob King, Paul Anthony Romero, Jason Graves, Tom Salla, Seicho Mucicjan, Crt Velasco, Sean Lohrich, Sylvain-Luc Brunet	M,M,M,M,M,M,M,M	8 Windows	1	Might and Magic	Hungary
Might and Magic IX	2002	3DO	New World	RPG	Fantasy	Barry Blum, Paul Romero, Robert King, Steve Baca	M,M,M,M	4 Windows	1	Might and Magic	USA
Might and Magic VI: The Mandate of Heaven	1998	3DO Company	New World Computing	Fantasy	Fantasy	Steve Baca, Robert King, Paul Romero, Jennifer Wang	M,M,M,M,F	4 Windows	1	Might & Magic	USA
Might and Magic VII: For Blood and Honor	1999	Ubisoft, 3DO Company	New World Computing	RPG	Fantasy	Paul Romero	M	1 Windows	1	Might & Magic	USA
Might and Magic VIII: Day of the Destroyer	2000	3DO Buka	New World	RPG	Fantasy	Rob King	M	1 Windows	1	Might and Magic	USA
Minna Iyar Chronicles	2010	Akasy Games	Kogado Software, Premium Agency	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Hiroto Saito	M	1 PSP	1		Japan
Mind Zero	2013	GungHo Online Entertainment, Akasy Games	Acquire, ZeroDiv	Dungeon Crawler, RPG	Alternate Reality, Fantasy	Yoh Ohyma, Kaori Tsurui, Hiromu Ito, Syntaro Jimbo, Yashiko Tachibana, JUN2 Yosuke Kurokawa, Masayuki Adaniya, Toshiki Katoh, Toshimichi Ise, yucat	M,F,M,M,M,M,M,M,M,M,F	11 PS Vita	1		Japan
Minions of Mirth	2005	Prairie Games	Prairie Games	MMORPG	Fantasy	Ronald Van Dierum	M	1 Windows	1		USA
Mist of Chaos	2007	Idea Fact, Cyberfront	Idea Factory, Neverland	Tactical RPG	Fantasy			PS3	1		Japan
Mistmare	2003	Strategy First	Axel Tribe	Action RPG	Fantasy			Windows	1		Slovenia
Mitsumete Knight	1998	Konami	Konami, Red Company	RPG	Fantasy	Atsushi Sato, Hana Hashikawa, Selya Murai	M,F,M	3 PS1	1		Japan
Mobile Armored Marine	2011	Hosted Games	Choice of Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Sci-Fi	NO MUSIC		Android, Browser-based, iOS	3		USA
Mobile Golf	2001	Nintendo	Camelot Software Planning	Sports, Action RPG	Sports	Motol Sakuraba	M	1 GBC	1		Japan
Monotari Denstetsu	1998	Hudson Soft Company	Make Software	RPG	Fantasy	Kazuyuki Sekiguchi, Takeaki Kunimoto	M,M	2 PS1	1		Japan
Monkey Hero	1999	Take Two	Blam!	RPG	Fantasy	Ed Goldfarb	M	1 PS1	1		USA
Monster Galaxy	2013	Gaia Interactive	Gaia Interactive	Monster-raising, RPG	Fantasy			Android, Browser-based	2		USA
Monster Guardians	2001	Konami	Konami, Mobile21 Co.	Monster Raising, RPG	Fantasy			GBA	1		Japan
Monster Hunter	2004	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tetsuya Shibata, Masato Koda, Mitsuhiro Takano	M,M,M	3 PS2	1	Monster Hunter	Japan
Monster Hunter 2	2006	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Masato Kohda, Yoko Komiya, Shinya Okada, Akihiko Narita, Hajime Hyakkoku	M,F,M,M,M	5 PS2	1	Monster Hunter	Japan
Monster Hunter 3 (tri)	2009	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yuko Komiya, Tadayoshi Makino	F,M	2 Wii, Wii U	2	Monster Hunter	Japan
Monster Hunter 4	2013	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Marika Suzuki, Mawako Chinone, Reo Uratani	F,F,M	3 3DS	1	Monster Hunter	Japan
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	2009	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yuko Komiya, Akihiko Narita, Tadayoshi Makino	F,M,M	3 PSP, iOS	2		Japan
Monster Hunter Tri	2009	Capcom	Capcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yuko Komiya, Tadayoshi Makino	F,M	2 Wii, Wii U, 3DS	3	Monster Hunter	Japan
Monster Kingdom: Jewel Summoner	2006	Atlus	GAIA Co.	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Shinji Hasee, Hitoshi Sakimoto, Yasunori Mitsuda, Kenji Ito, Yoko Shimomura, Ayako Sato, Yasuyuki Suzuki, Kyouji Iwata, Tsukasa Masuko, Takahiro Ogata	M,M,M,M,F,F,M,M,M	10 PSP	1		Japan
Monster Mongpiece	2013	Idea Factory	Compile Heart	RPG, Card-based	Fantasy	JUN2, Maric, Syntaro Jimbo, Yoh Ohyma	M,F,M,M	4 PS Vita	1		Japan
Monster RPG 2	2013	Nooskew Software	Nooskew Software	RPG	Fantasy			Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, Android, iOS, Ouya	4		Canada
Monster Seed	1998	Sun Corporation of America	NK System	RPG	Fantasy	Ken Kojima	M	1 PS1	1		Japan
MonsterMMORPG	2011	MonsterMMORPG	Furkan Gözükara	MMORPG	Fantasy			Browser-based	1		Turkey
Moonlight Online	2012	IGG	IGG	MMORPG	Fantasy			Windows	1		Singapore
Morning's Wrath	2005	Ethereal Darkness Interactive Games	Ethereal Darkness Interactive Games	Action RPG	Fantasy			Windows	1		USA
Morpha: Cloud Kingdom	2012	Chinzilla	Chinzilla	Monster-raising, RPG	Fantasy			iOS	1		USA
Mortal Online	2010	Star Vault	Star Vault	MMORPG	Fantasy	Patrik Jarlstrom	M	1 Windows	1		Sweden

Mother 3	2006	Nintendo	Nintendo SPD, HAL, Brownie Brown	RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Shogo Sakai	M	1	GBA	1	Mother	Japan
Mount&Blade	2008	Paradox Interactive AB	Tale Worlds	Action RPG	Historical, Medieval	Jesse Hopkins	M	1	Windows	1	Mount & Blade	Turkey
Mount&Blade: With Fire and Sword	2011	Paradox Interactive AB, 1C Company	Tale Worlds	Strategy, Action RPG	Fantasy	Jesse Hopkins, Pyotr Sainikov	M,M	2	Windows	1	Mount & Blade	Turkey
MS Saga: A New Dawn	2009	Bandai	Bandai	RPG	Sci-Fi	Tadayoshi Makino	M	1	PS2	1	Gundam	Japan
MU Online	2003	Webzen, Digital Media Exchange, PPT Online	Webzen	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed internally	X	1	Windows	1	MU Online	South Korea
Muskele: Rise of the Golems	2009	Necroteales Games	Necroteales Games	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy				Browser-based	1		USA
Mugen Souls	2012	Compile Heart, NIS America, NIS Europe, Ghostlight	Compile Heart	RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Kaneiko, Tenpei Sato	M,M	2	Windows, PS3	2		Japan
Muramasa: The Demon Blade (Muramasa Rebirth)	2009	Marvelous Entertainment, Ignition Entertainment, Rising Star Games, Marvelous AQL, Aksys Games	Vanillaware	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yoshimi Kudo, Nohyuki Kamikura, Mitsuhiro Kaneda, Kimihito Abe, Atsua Chiba, Hitoshi Sakimoto, Masaharu Iwata	M,M,M,M,F,M,M	7	Wii, Wii U, PS Vita	3		Japan
Murkon's Refuge	2002	RinkWorks	RinkWorks	RPG	Fantasy				Browser-based	1		USA
Musashi: Samurai Legend	2005	Square Enix	Square Enix	Action RPG	Fantasy	Maasahi Hamezumi, Junya Nakano, Yuki Iwai, Takayuki Iwai	M,M,F,M	4	PS2	1	Musashi	Japan
My Brute	2009	Motion Twin, Advanced Mobile Applications, Bulkypix	Motion Twin	RPG	Fantasy	Guillaume Lebrasseur	M	1	Android, iOS, Browser-based	4		France
Mystic Chronicles	2012	Natsume	Kemco	RPG	Fantasy				PSP, PS Vita, iOS	3		Japan
Mythos	2011	HanbitSoft, Frogster	Flagship Studios, T3 Entertainment	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy	Derrick Kim	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Namco x Capcom	2005	Namco	Mondolith	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yasunori Mitsuda	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Narullion: Lethian Another Story	2002	Digital Age	Gara & Baram Corp., Grigon Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	TelMP	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Naruto Konoha Senki	2003	Tomy	Tomy	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy				GBA	1	Naruto	Japan
Naruto: Rise of a Ninja	2007	Ubisoft	Ubisoft	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Joan Zur	M	1	X360	1	Naruto	Canada
Natuk	1999	Tom Proudfoot Games	Tom Proudfoot Games	RPG	Fantasy	Dave Gerry	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Necromania: Trap of Darkness	2002	Strategy First Inc.	CINEMAX s.r.o.	Action RPG	Fantasy	Michal Haril, Peter Masár	M,M	2	Windows	1		Czech Republic
Necron	2000	CDV Software	Reaktor	FPS, Action, MMO	Cyberpunk	Max Corbacho, Ian Boddy, Steve Roach	M,M,M	3	Windows	1		Germany
Necron 2: Beyond Dome of York	2004	Oracle studios AG	reaktor.com	MMORPG, Action	Cyberpunk, Sci-Fi	Max Corbacho, Ian Boddy, Steve Roach	M,M,M	3	Windows	1	Necron	Germany
Necropts Puzzle Adventure	2009	Capcom	Infinite Interactive, Griptonite Games	Puzzle, RPG	Fantasy	Marc Dorell	M	1	Windows, Wii	2		Australia
Nethergate	1998	Spiderweb Software	Spiderweb Software	RPG	Historical	Benjamin Young	M	1	Windows, Macintosh	2		USA
Neuro Hunter	2005	Deep Silver	Media Art	FPS, Action RPG	Cyberpunk, Sci-Fi	Anatoliy Shuch, Tatiana Nemiro, Alexander Volozhin, Konstantin Galinsky	M,F,M,M	4	Windows	1		Russia
Newerwinter	2013	Perfect World Entertainment	Cryptic Studios	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy	Dan Negovan	M	1	Windows	1	D&D	USA
Newerwinter Nights	2002	Atari, MacSoft	BioWare	RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule	M	1	Windows	1	D&D	Canada
Newerwinter Nights 2	2006	Atari	Obsidian Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule	M	1	Windows	1	D&D	USA
Next King: Koi no Senren Okoku	1997	Bandai	Alfa System, MARS Corporation	RPG	Fantasy	Kenichi Kamio	M	1	Saturn	1		Japan
Nexus: The Kingdom of the Winds	1998	Nexon	Nexon	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		South Korea
Ni no Kuni: Dominion of the Dark Djinn	2010	Level-5	Level-5, Studio Ghibli	RPG, Monster Raising	Fantasy	Joe Hiseishi, Rei Kondoh	M,M	2	Nintendo DS	1	Ni no Kuni	Japan
Ni no Kuni: Wrath of the White Witch	2013	Namco Bandai	Level-5, Animation: Studio Ghibli	RPG	Fantasy	Joe Hiseishi, Rei Kondoh	M,M	2	PS3	1	Ni no Kuni	Japan
Ner	2010	Square Enix	Cavia	Action RPG	Fantasy	Keiichi Okabe, Kakeru Ishihama, Keigo Hoashi, Takafumi Nishimura	M,M,M,M	4	X360, PS3	2		Japan
Night Watch	2005	CDV	Nival	Tactical RPG	Modern, Fantasy	Alexander Pushnoy	M	1	Windows	1		Russia
Nightcater: Defeat the Darkness	2001	Microsoft	VR1 Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Atsila Kirpal, Chad Mousholder, Steve Babst, Michael Bailey Smith	M,M,M,M	4	Xbox	1		USA
Nightmare of Druga, The Fushigino Dungeon	2004	Namco	Arika, Chunsoft	RPG	Fantasy	Maasahi Yano, Ayaiko Saso, Junko Ozawa	M,F,F	3	PS2	1		Japan
NightStone	2003	Titus France SA	New Horizon Studios S.L.	Action RPG	Fantasy	Antonio Manuel Ceballos Coufago	M	1	Windows	1		Spain
Ninja Saga	2013	Enagist Entertainment	Enagist Entertainment	RPG	Anime, Fantasy, Fighting				Android, Browser-based, iOS	3		China
Noxalgia	2008	Ticmo	Matrix, Red Ent.	RPG	Fantasy	Rei Kondoh, Kaori Komuro, Shinichiro Sato	M,F,M	3	Nintendo DS	1		Japan
Nox	2000	EA	Westwood Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Frank Klepacki	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Nox Quest	2000	Westwood Studios	Westwood Studios	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		USA
NUGA-CELL Nurture Garment Celebration	2009	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Simulation, RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy	Kenji Kaneiko	M	1	PS2	1	NUGA-CELL Nurture Garment Celebration	Japan
Nuchi Tsuri 64	1998	Pack-in-Video Co	DDL Corporation	RPG, Fishing	Fantasy	Katsuhiko Hayashi	M	1	N64	1		Japan
O.D.T.: Escape... or Die Trying	1998	Pygnosis Limited	Pygnosis Limited	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Daniel L. Griffiths, Francis Gorgé	M,M	2	Windows, PS1	2		UK
Odium	1999	Topware Interactive	Metropolis Software House	Tactical RPG	Mystery	Adam Skonup	M	1	Windows, Macintosh, Linux, Amiga	4		Poland
Odd Yasha	1998	Alice Soft	Alice Soft	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		Japan
Of Orcs and Men	2012	Focus Home Interactive	Cyanide	Action RPG	Fantasy	Olivier Derivière	M	1	Windows, X360, PS3	1	Of Orcs and Men	France
Ogre Battle 64: Person of Lordly Caliber	1999	Nintendo	Quest	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Maaharu Iwata, Hayato Matsuo, Hitoshi Sakimoto	M,M,M	3	N64, Wii, Wii U	3		Japan
Okage: Shadow King	2003	Sony Computer Entertainment	Zener Works, Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.	RPG	Fantasy	JOH-ICHI DOI, TOSHIHIRO KAJIWARA, YOSHIOKA KAWABASHI, YASUAKI KOHSE, TOSHIOKI MURATA, Kazuhide Tada	M,M,M,M,M,M	6	PS2	1		Japan
On the Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness: Episode One	2008	Hothead Games	Hothead Games	RPG	Horror, Mystery	Jeff Tymoschuk	M	1	PS3, X360	1	On the Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness	Canada
Once Upon a Knight	2003	Deep Silver, ZUXOZE Entertainment	REALITY PUMP Sp.	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Gerd Hoffmann, Joachim Schaefer, Maciej Pawlowski	M,M,M	3	Windows, Mac OS X	2		Poland
One Piece: Oceans of Dreams!	2003	Bandai	FlagFrog Productions, Studio Artlink	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kohsei Tanaka	M	1	PS1	1	One Piece	Japan
Oni Zero: Fukukatsu	2001	Pandora Box	Pandora Box	RPG	Anime, Fantasy				PS1	1		Japan
Oni Zero: Sengoku Ransei Hyakuryouan	2007	Compile Heart	Compile Heart	RPG	Fantasy				Nintendo DS	1	Oni Zero	Japan
Onimusha Tactics	2003	Capcom	Capcom	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kajyo Music Ltd., Ryuichi Nitta, Keiji Yamagishi, Kaori Nakabai	X,M,M,F	4	GBA, Wii U Virtual Console	2	Onimusha	Japan
Opal's Quest	2006	Alten8	Corelane	RPG	Anime, Fantasy				I2ME	1		France
Operation Darkness	2007	Success, Atlas	Success	Tactical RPG	Historical, Fantasy	Kenichi Arakawa, Kazushi Tsunokubo, Tetsuro Satō	M,M,M	3	X360	1		Japan
Opus	2007	Koei	ArtePlaza	RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	HIROSHI SAKIHARA, NOHYUKI KAMIKURA, MASAHARU IWATA, MITSUHIRO KANEIDA, KIMIHITO ABE, Masahito Namiki	M,M,M,M,M,M	6	Wii	1		Japan
Orcs & Elves	2007	EA Mobile	Fountainhead Entertainment Inc., id Software	RPG	Fantasy	Matthew C. Ross, Richard Douglas	M,M	2	BREW, I2ME, Nintendo DS	3		USA
Order & Chaos Online	2013	Gameloft S.A.	Gameloft Software Beijing	MMORPG	Fantasy	Diego Zaldivar, Maxime Goulet, Denis Vachon	M,M,M	3	Windows, Windows Phone, Mac OS X, Fire OS, iOS, Ouya	6		China
One no Shikabane o Koete Yuke	1999	KEZ	Alfa System, MARS Corporation, Central	RPG	Fantasy	Leiko Kikara, Kazuhiko Toyama	F,M	2	PS1	1	Oreshika	Japan
Organ Trail	2011	The Men Who Wear Many Hats	The Men Who Wear Many Hats	Simulation, Action RPG	Post-Apocalyptic				Browser-based	1	Organ Trail	USA
Oriental Blue: Ao no Tengai	2003	Hudson Soft	Red Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Ichirō Shimakura	M	1	GBA	1		Japan
Orphen: Scion of Sorcery	2000	Activision	Shade	Action RPG	Fantasy	Masanori Hibichi	M	1	PS2	1	Adaptation of Sorcerous Stabber Orphen	Japan

Duka Houshin	1999	ESP Software	Media Works	Tactical RPG	Fantasy				Dreamcast	1		Japan
PAL: Shikien Denetsu	1997	Toei Video Co, Tohokushinsha Film Corp	Pill in Café Co	RPG	Fantasy				PS1	2		Japan
Pandora's Tower	2011	Nintendo	Ganbarion	Action RPG	Fantasy		M		Wii, Wii U	2		Japan
Pangea	1999	Success Corp.		RPG	Fantasy				PS1	1		Japan
Panzer Dragon Saga	1998	SEGA	Team Andromeda	RPG	Fantasy, Post-apocalyptic		F,F		Saturn	1	Panzer Dragon	Japan
Paper Mario	2000	Nintendo	Intelligent	Action RPG	Fantasy		F,M,M		N64	2	Mario Bros	Japan
Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door	2004	Nintendo	Intelligent Systems	Fantasy	Fantasy		M,F,F		Gamecube	1	Mario	Japan
Paper Sorcerer	2013	Ultra Runaway Games	Ultra Runaway Games	RPG	Fantasy		M		Windows	1		USA
Paradise Cracked	2002	Buka, JoWood	MIST Land South	Tactical RPG	Cyberpunk		M		Windows	1		Russia
Parallel Kingdom: Age of Thrones	2008	PerBlue	PerBlue	MMORPG	Fantasy				Android, iOS	2		USA
Parameters	2012	Nekogames	Nekogames	RPG	Fantasy				Browser-based	1		Japan
Parasite Eve	1998	Square	Square	RPG	Mystery, Modern, Paranormal		F		PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4		Japan
Parasite Eve II	1999	Square	Square	Action RPG	Sci-Fi		M		PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4	Parasite Eve	Japan
Parus	2004	Bayer&Seel OG	Bayer&Seel OG	Simulation, MMORPG	Sci-Fi				Browser-based	1		Austria
Paradian	2009	ND GAMES		RPG	Historical, War				Windows	1		Russia
Patapon 2	2009	Sony Computer Entertainment	Pyramid, Sony Computer Entertainment	Action RPG	Music		M,M		PSP	1	Patapon	Japan
Patapon 3	2011	Sony Computer Entertainment	Pyramid, SCE Japan Studio	Fantasy	Rhythm, RPG, Strategy		M,M,M		PSP	1	Patapon	Japan
Path of Exile	2013	Grinding Gear Games	Grinding Gear Games	MMORPG	Fantasy		M,M		Windows	2		New Zealand
Pekologic	2005	Buka Entertainment	Ice Pick Lodge	Action RPG	Horror, Mystery		M		Windows	1		Russia
Penny Arcade's On the Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness 3	2012	Penny Arcade	Deboyd Games	RPG	Modern, Mystery		M		Windows, X360, Android, iOS	4	On the Rain-Slick Precipice	Canada
Penny Arcade's On the Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness 4	2013	Penny Arcade	Deboyd Games	RPG	Modern, Mystery		X		Windows, X360	2	On the Rain-Slick Precipice	Canada
Perfect World	2005	Beijing Perfect World, Level-up!, Games-Masters	Beijing Perfect World	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Perfect World	China
Perpetuum	2010	Avatar Creations	Avatar Creations	MMORPG	Sci-Fi		M		Windows, Mac OS X	2		Hungary
Persona 2: Eternal Punishment	2000	Atlus	Atlus	RPG	Fantasy		F,M,M		PS1	2	Megami Tensei	Japan
Persona 2: Innocent Sin	1999	Atlus	Atlus	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi		F,M,M,F,M,F		PS1	6	Persona	Japan
Phage Wars 2	2009	Armor Games	Armor Games	Strategy, Action RPG	Sci-Fi				Browser-based	1	Phage Wars	USA
Phantasy Star 0	2008	Sega	Sega	RPG, Hack and Slash	Sci-Fi		M,M		Nintendo DS	2	Phantasy Star	Japan
Phantasy Star 0	2009	Sega	Sonic Team	RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi		M,M,M		Nintendo DS	1	Phantasy Star	Japan
Phantasy Star Online	2000	Sega	Sonic Team	MMORPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy		M,F		Gamecube, Xbox	2	Phantasy Star	Japan
Phantasy Star Online 2	2012	Sega	Sega	Action, MMORPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy		M,M,M		Windows, PS Vita, PS4	1	Phantasy Star	Japan
Phantasy Star Online Episode III: C.A.R.D. Revolution	2003	Sega	Sonic Team	Card Based, RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy		M,M,M		Gamecube	3	Phantasy Star	Japan
Phantasy Star Portable	2009	Sega	AlfaSystem, Sonic Team	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi		M,F,M,M		PSP	4	Phantasy Star	Japan
Phantasy Star Universe	2006	Sega	Sonic Team	Action RPG	Fantasy		M,F,M,M,M		Windows, X360, PS3	5	Phantasy Star	Japan
Phantom Brave	2004	Nippon Ichi, Koel	Nippon Ichi	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy		M		PS2	1		Japan
Phantom Brave: The Bermuda Triangle	2009	Nippon Ichi	Nippon Ichi	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy		M		PSP, Wii	2	Phantom Brave	Japan
Phantom Knight: Mugen no Meikyū II	2000	Software House Parsley	Software House Parsley	RPG	Anime, Fantasy		F,M		Windows	2	Phantom Knight: Mugen no Meikyū	Japan
Phoenix Dynasty Online	2007	Ingle Games	Object Software	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Pillars of Eternity	2001	Ambrosia Software	Beenox Inc.	RPG	Fantasy		M		Windows, Mac OS, Mac OS X	1		Canada
Pirate Galaxy	2009	gamigo AG	Splitscreen Studios GmbH	Action RPG	Sci-Fi		M		Windows, Browser-based	2		Germany
Pirate101	2012	Kingisle Entertainment	Kingisle Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy, kids		M,M,M,M,M,M,M		Windows, Mac OS X	7	Wizard101	USA
Pirates of the Burning Sea	2008	Portulus Games, Gamearena, SOE	Plying Lab Software, Portulus Games	MMORPG	Historical, Maritime		M,M		Windows	2		USA
Pirates of the Caribbean	2003	Bethesda Softworks LLC	Sea Dog	RPG	Naval, Fantasy		M		Windows, Xbox	1	Pirates of the Caribbean	Russia
Planescape: Torment	1999	Interplay Entertainment	Black Isle Studios	RPG	Fantasy		M		Windows	1	D&D	USA
PlaneShift	2000	Atomic Blue	Volunteer Team	MMORPG	Fantasy		M,M,M,M		Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	5		Italy
Planet Laika	1999	Enix	Quintet Co., Zeque	RPG	Sci-Fi		M,M		PS1	2		Japan
Pocket Kingdom: Own the World	2004	Nokia	Sega	MMORPG	Fantasy				N-Gage	1		Japan
Pocket Legends	2010	Spacetime Studios	Spacetime Studios	MMORPG	Anime, Fantasy				Android, Browser-based, iOS	4		USA
Pocket Monsters Ao	1999	Nintendo	Creatures Inc, Game Freak Inc, Nintendo	RPG	Fantasy		M		GB, 3DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Black 2	2012	The Pokémon Company	Game Freak	Monster-raising, RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy		M,M,M		3DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Blue Version	1998	Nintendo	Creatures Inc, Game Freak Inc, Nintendo	RPG	Fantasy		M		GB, 3DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Card GB2: GR Dan Sanjui	2001	Nintendo	Hudson Soft	Card-based RPG	Fantasy				GB	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Colosseum	2003	Nintendo	Genius Sonority	RPG	Modern, Fantasy		M		Gamecube	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Crystal	2000	Nintendo	Game Freak	RPG, Monster Raising	Fantasy		M,M,M		GB	3	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Diamond	2006	Nintendo	Game Freak	RPG, Monster Raising	Modern, Fantasy		M,M,F,M		Nintendo DS	4	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Emerald	2004	Nintendo, The Pokémon Company	Game Freak	RPG, Monster Raising	Modern, Fantasy		M,M,F,M		GBA	4	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon FireRed	2004	Nintendo	Game Freak	RPG, Monster Raising	Modern, Fantasy		M,M		GBA	2	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Fushigi no Dungeon: Ikuzai Arashi no Bōkenden	2009	Nintendo	Chunsoft Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy, Modern				Wii	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Fushigi no Dungeon: Mezase! Hikari no Bōkenden	2009	Nintendo	Chunsoft Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy, Modern				Wii	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Gold Version	1999	Nintendo	Creatures Inc, Game Freak Inc, Nintendo	RPG	Fantasy		M,M		GB, 3DS	2	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon HeartGold	2009	The Pokémon Company	Game Freak	RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy		M,M,F,M,M		Nintendo DS	5	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon LeafGreen	2004	Nintendo	Game Freak	RPG, Monster Raising	Modern, Fantasy		M,M		GBA	2	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team	2005	Nintendo	Chunsoft Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy		M,M		Nintendo DS	2	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky	2009	Nintendo	Chunsoft Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy, Modern		M,M,M,M,M		Nintendo DS	5	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Gates to Infinity	2012	The Pokémon Company	Spike Chunsoft	Dungeon Crawler, Tactical RPG	Anime, Fantasy		M,M		3DS	2	Pokémon	Japan

Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team	2005	Nintendo	Chunsoft Co.	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Arata Iiyoshi, Atsuhiko Ishizuna	M,M	2	Nintendo DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Pearl	2006	Nintendo	Game Freak	RPG, Monster Raising	Modern, Fantasy	Go Ichinose, Junichi Masuda, Hitomi Sato, Morikazu Aoki	M,M,F,M	4	Nintendo DS	2	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Platinum	2009	Nintendo	Creatures Inc., Game Freak	RPG	Anime, Fantasy, Modern	Hitomi Sato, Satoshi Nohara, Junichi Masuda, Gō Ichinose	F,M,M,M	4	Nintendo DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Ranger	2006	Nintendo	Creatures, HAL	Action RPG	Modern, Fantasy	Takuto Kikuta, Kinta Sato	M,M	2	Nintendo DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Ranger: Guardian Signs	2010	Nintendo, The Pokémon Company	Creatures Inc.	Action RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy	Ken-ichi Koyano, SIGERO, Katsuke Oku	M,T,M	3	Nintendo DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Red Version	1998	Nintendo	Creatures Inc, Game Freak Inc, Nintendo	RPG	Fantasy	Junichi Masuda	M	1	GB, 3DS	2	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Ruby	2002	Nintendo	Game Freak	RPG, Monster Raising	Modern, Fantasy	Go Ichinose, Morikazu Aoki, Junichi Masuda	M,M,M	3	GBA	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Sapphire	2002	Nintendo	Game Freak	RPG, Monster Raising	Modern, Fantasy	Go Ichinose, Morikazu Aoki, Junichi Masuda	M,M,M	3	GBA	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Silver Version	1999	Nintendo	Creatures Inc, Game Freak Inc, Nintendo	Fantasy	Junichi Masuda, Go Ichinose	M,M	2	GB, 3DS	2	Pokémon	Japan	
Pokémon SoulSilver	2009	The Pokémon Company	Game Freak	RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy	Go Ichinose, Shota Kageyama, Hitomi Sato, Junichi Masuda, Takuto Kikuta	M,M,F,M,M	5	Nintendo DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Stadium	1998	Nintendo	HAL Laboratory, Nintendo EAD	Fantasy	Fantasy	Hajime Wakai, Kenta Nagata, Tōru Minegishi	M,M,M	3	N64	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Trading Card Game	1998	Nintendo	Creatures Inc, Hudson Soft Company	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Ichirō Shimakura	M	1	GB, 3DS	2	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon White	2011	Nintendo	Game Freak	RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy	Shota Kageyama, Gō Ichinose, Hitomi Sato, Junichi Masuda, Minako Adachi	M,M,F,M,M	5	Nintendo DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon White 2	2012	The Pokémon Company	Game Freak	Monster-raising, RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy	Go Ichinose, Hitomi Sato, Teruo Taniguchi	M,F,F	3	3DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon X	2013	Nintendo	Game Freak	RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy	Shota Kageyama, Minako Adachi, Hitomi Sato, Junichi Masuda	M,F,F,M	4	3DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	2005	Nintendo	Genius Sonority	RPG	Modern, Fantasy	Tsukasa Tawada	M	1	Gamecube	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Y	2013	Nintendo	Game Freak	RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy	Shota Kageyama, Minako Adachi, Hitomi Sato, Junichi Masuda	M,F,F,M	4	3DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon Yellow Version: Special Pikachu Edition	1998	Nintendo	Creatures Inc, Game Freak Inc, Nintendo	RPG	Fantasy	Junichi Masuda	M	1	GB, 3DS	2	Pokémon	Japan
Pokémon: Black	2011	Nintendo	Game Freak	RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy	Shota Kageyama, Gō Ichinose, Hitomi Sato, Junichi Masuda, Minako Adachi	M,M,F,M,F	5	Nintendo DS	1	Pokémon	Japan
Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Drannor	2001	Ubisoft	Stormfront Studios	RPG	Fantasy	Andrew Boyd, Robb Mills	M,M	2	Windows	1		USA
PopoLoCris	2005	Agetec	G-artists, Sony Computer Entertainment	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Yoshiyuki Sasaki, Tetsuo Ishikawa, Yoshifumi Iio	M,M,M	3	PSP	1	PopoLoCris	Japan
Popolocrois Monogatari II	2000	SCE	SCE	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Tetsuo Ishikawa, Yoshiyuki Sasaki, Yoshifumi Iio	M,M,M	3	PS1	1	PopoLoCris	Japan
PopoLoCris: Adventure of the Law of the Moon	2004	Sony Computer Entertainment	Sony Online Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Rui, Mutsuru Nomiyama, Keiji Nagashima	M,F,M	3	PS2	1	PopoLoCris	Japan
PopoLoCris: Hajimari no Bouken	2002	Sony Computer Entertainment	SCEA	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kow Otani	M	1	PS2	1	PopoLoCris	Japan
PopoLoGue	1998	G-Artists, Sugar & Rockets, SCE	SCE	RPG	Fantasy	Yoshiyuki Sasaki, Tetsuo Ishikawa, Yoshifumi Iio, Yuko Araki	M,M,M,F	4	PS1	1	PopoLoCris	Japan
Power Quest	1998	Sun Corporation	Japan System Supply	RPG	Modern, Sci-Fi	Kumiko Fujiwara	F	1	GB	1	Power Quest	Japan
Prince of Qin	2002	Strategy First Inc.	Object Software Limited	Action RPG	Fantasy	Brahma Studio	X	1	Windows	1		China
Princess Crown	1997	Atlus	Atlus, Racydm	Action RPG	Fantasy	Toshikazu Tanaka	M	1	Saturn, PSP	2		Japan
Princess Maker: Yumejinu Yōsei	1997	SCE	Ninelives	RPG	Fantasy	Maashiro Kajiura	M	1	Saturn, PS1	1	Princess Maker	Japan
Princess Quest	1998	Increment P	AIC, Increment P Corp	RPG	Fantasy	J. Watanabe	M	1	Saturn	2	Princess Quest	Japan
Prism Ark: Prism Heart II	2006	Pajama Soft	Pajama Soft	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Odake's, Shing Hatakeyama (C.G mix), Fumi Oto	M,M,F	3	Windows	1	Prism Heart	Japan
Priston Tale	2003	Yedang Online	Triglow Pictures Inc.	MMORPG	Fantasy	Kevin Riepl, others	M,X	2	Windows	1	Priston Tale	South Korea
Project Entropia	2003	Mind Ark PE AB	Mind Ark PE AB	MMORPG, Action	Sci-Fi				Windows			Sweden
Project X Zone	2013	Namco Bandai Games	Monolith Software	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fighting	Salamander Factory, Aikatsu Tōhyama, Yuzō Koshino, Takuya Hanasaka, Chikayo Fukuda, Hideki Okugawa, Masami Ueda, Makoto Tomozawa, Tamayo Kawamoto, Setsuo Yamamoto	X,M,M,M,F,M,M,M,F,M	10	3DS	1		Japan
Project Zomboid	2013	Indie Stone	Indie Stone	RPG	Post-apocalyptic	Zach Beever	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		UK
Puppet Guardian	2007	Artifact, Mirror Realms	Cold Breath	MMORPG	Fantasy				Browser-based			Japan
Pursumal Pursumal	1999	Culture Publishers	P2 Company	Action RPG	Fantasy	Maaschi Kageyama, Satoshi Ishikawa, Yui Akasaka	M,M,M	3	PS1	1		Japan
Puzzle Chronicles	2010	Konami	Infinite Interactive	Puzzle, RPG	Fantasy	Bart Klepka	M	1	Windows, X360, PS3, PSP, Nintendo DS	1		Australia
Puzzle Hero	2008	Reflexive Entertainment	Genimo Interactive	Puzzle, RPG	Fantasy	Levan Nadashvili	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Puzzle Kingdoms	2009	Zoo Publishing	Infinite Interactive Pty.	Puzzle, RPG	Fantasy	Marc Derell	M	1	Windows, Wii, Nintendo DS	3		Australia
Puzzle Quest 2	2010	d3 Publisher	Infinite Interactive	RPG, Puzzle	Fantasy				Nintendo DS, XBLA, Windows	3	Puzzle Quest	Australia
Puzzle Quest 2	2010	d3 Publisher	Infinite Interactive	Puzzle, RPG	Fantasy				Windows, Windows Phone, iOS, Android, BREW	5	Puzzle Quest	Australia
Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords	2007	d3 Publisher	1st Playable Productions, Engine Software, Infinite Interactive	Puzzle, Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Marc Derell	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, PS2, PSP, X360, Wii, iOS	7	Puzzle Quest	USA
Puzzle Quest: Galactrix	2009	d3 Publisher	Infinite Interactive, Aspyr Media	RPG, Puzzle	Fantasy	Marc Derell	M	1	Nintendo DS, PSN, XBLA, Windows	4	Puzzle Quest	Australia
Pyrrhic Tales: Prelude to Darkness	2002	Zero Sum	Zero Sum	RPG	Fantasy	Christopher Ariza	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Quest 64	1998	THQ Inc	Imagineer	RPG	Fantasy	Masamichi Amano	M	1	N64	1		Japan
Quest for Glory II: Trial by Fire	2008	AGDI	AGDI	Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	Mark Selbert, Chris Braymen	M,M	2	Windows	1	Quest for Glory	USA
Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire	1998	Sierra On-Line	Yosemite Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Chance Thomas	M	1	Windows, Macintosh	2	Quest for Glory	UK
Quest: Brian's Journey	2000	Sun Corporation	Atelier Double Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Tzumi Shimizu	F	1	GB	1		Japan
R.A.W.: Realm of Ancient War	2012	Focus Home Interactive, Zoo Digital Publishing	Wizarbox	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yann Van der Cruyssen, neosounds	M,X	2	Windows, X360, PS3	3		France
Racing Lagoon	1999	SCE	Square	Driving, RPG	Racing	Noriko Matsueda	F	1	PS1	1		Japan
Radiant Historia	2011	Atlus	Atlus, Headlock Corporation	RPG	Anime, Cyberpunk, Fantasy	Yoko Shimomura	F	1	Nintendo DS	1		Japan
Radiata Stories	2005	Square Enix	tri-Ace	Action RPG	Fantasy	Noniyuki Iwadare	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Rage of Mages	1998	Microlds, Monolith Productions	Nival Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Igor Krasimirov	M	1	Windows	1		Russia
Rage of Mages II: Necromancer	1999	Monolith Productions	Nival Entertainment	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Mikhail Matveev, Igor Krasimirov, Andrey Fedorenko	M,M,M	3	Windows	1	Rage of Mages	Russia
Ragnarök Online (Ragnarök Online)	2002	Gravity Co.	Gravity Co.	MMORPG	Anime, Fantasy	soundTEMP, NEOCYON, others	X,X,X	3	Windows	1	Ragnarök	South Korea
Ragnarök Online 2: Legend of the Second	2012	Gravity Corp, Asiasoft, Playpark, Gravity Interactive	Gravity, Team Mercury	MMORPG	Fantasy	Yoko Kanno	F	1	Windows	1	Ragnarök	South Korea
Rainbow Moon	2012	eastasiasoft	SideQuest Studios	Dungeon Crawler, Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Rafael Dyll	M	1	PS3, PS4, PS Vita	3		Germany
Ran Online	2004	GameSamba	Min Communications	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Rance SO: Hiboribocchi no Onna no Ko	2002	Alice Soft	Alice Soft	RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows	1		Japan
Rance VI: Zeth Hibiki	2004	Alice Soft	Alice Soft	RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows	1	Rance	Japan
Rappelo	2006	Gala Lab, Gala Japan, Webzen	rFlavor, Gala Lab	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea

Ravensword: Shadowlands	2012	Crescent Moon Games	Crescent Moon Games	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, Android, iOS	9	Ravensword	USA
Real Lives	2002	Educational Simulations Inc.	Educational Simulations Inc.	Simulation, RPG	Education				Windows	1		USA
Realms of the Mad God	2011	Wild Shadow Studios	Wild Shadow Studios	MMORPG, Action	Fantasy				Windows, Mac OS X, browser-based	3		USA
Realms of Adventure	2000	Sunrise Interactive	Umak	RPG	Fantasy			NO MUSIC	MSX2	1		Netherlands
Realms of Arkana: Blade of Destiny	2013	United Independent Entertainment GmbH	Crafty Studios Game Development GmbH	RPG	Fantasy	M			Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	1	Realms of Arkana	Austria
Realms Online	2011	NGD Studios	NGD Studios	RPG	Fantasy				Windows, Linux	2		Argentina
Reaper: Tale of a Pale Swordsman	2013	Hexage	Hexage	Action RPG	Fantasy			Jakub Holavský	Windows, Windows Phone, Mac OS X, Android, Blackberry, iOS, Ouya	1		Czech Republic
Rebelstar: Tactical Command	2009	Nomco	Cordo	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi		X	Paragon 5	GBA	1		UK
Rebirth Moon	2009	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	M		Kenji Kaneko	PS2	1		Japan
Record of Agarest War	2007	Compile Heart, Red	Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	M		Kenji Kaneko	PS3	1	Record of Agarest War	Japan
Record of Agarest War 2	2010	Compile Heart, Aksys Games, Ghostlight	Idea Factory, Red Entertainment, Laughing Jackal	Tactical RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows, PS2	2	Record of Agarest War	Japan
Record of Agarest War Zero	2009	Compile Heart, Red Entertainment, Aksys, Ghostlight	Idea Factory, Laughing Jackal	Tactical RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows, PS3, X360, iOS, Android	5	Record of Agarest War	Japan
Record of Lodoss War	2000	Conspiracy Entertainment	Neverland	Action RPG	Fantasy	M,F,F		Kunihiko Hashima, Akiko Ishibashi, Tomoko Morita	Dreamcast	3	Record of Lodoss War	Japan
Record of Lodoss War: Advent of Cardice	2000	ESP, Conspiracy, Crave, Swing!	Neverland	Action RPG	Fantasy				Dreamcast	3	Record of Lodoss War	Japan
Record of Lodoss War: Eiyuu Kishinden	1998	Tomy	Tomy	RPG	Fantasy	M,F		Kaoru Wada, Chinsuu Kuzuu	GBC	1	Record of Lodoss War	Japan
Red Hawk	1999	Joy Toon Soft	Softfy	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		South Korea
Red Stone	2004	GameGame, GameOn, L&K Logic Korea, Valve	L&K Logic Korea	MMORPG	Fantasy	M		Tae-Hyung Seo	Windows	1		South Korea
Redmoon	1999	H2 Limited	IC Entertainment	MMORPG, Action RPG	Sci-Fi				Windows	1		South Korea
Redshift	2013	Postech	The Tiniest Shark	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	M		Cliff Harris	Windows, Mac OS X	1		UK
Regnum Online	2007	NGD Studios	NGD Studios	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		Argentina
Rent-A-Hero No. 2	2000	Sega	Aspect Co.	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	M,F,M		Kojiro Mikusa, Kayoko Matsushima, Hiro	Dreamcast, Xbox	3	Rent-A-Hero	Japan
Requiem: Memento Mori	2008	Gravity	Gravity Co.	MMORPG	Fantasy	X		Developed Internally	Windows	1	Memento Mori	South Korea
Requital	2006	Excalibur Publishing	Akella, Primal Software	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		Russia
Resonance of Fate	2010	Sega	tri-Ace	RPG	Fantasy	M,M		Kohei Tanaka, Motoo Sekuraba	X360, PS3	2		Japan
Restricted Area	2005	Whiptail	Master Creating	Action RPG	Cyberpunk	M,M		Pierre Gerwig-Langer, Conny Kollet	Windows	2		Germany
Retro Game Challenge	2009	XSEED Games	Indieszero Co.	Racing, Action, RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi			NEC CO. LTD., Koji Yamada, Naoto Oba	Nintendo DS	3		Japan
Return to Chaos	2001	George Gilbert	George Gilbert	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		USA
Return to Knossos	1998	Sierra On-Line	PyroTechnix	RPG	Fantasy	M		Chuck Mitchell	Windows	1		USA
Revenant	1999	Edios	Cinemax	RPG	Fantasy	M		Victor Palagano	Windows	1		USA
RF Online	2006	CCR International, Codemasters, Gamescampus, Lyto	CCR	MMORPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	X		Developed Internally	Windows	1		South Korea
Rhapsody of Zephyr	1998	Softmax Co	Softmax Co	RPG	Fantasy				Windows, Dreamcast, PS2	3		South Korea
Rhapsody: A Musical Adventure	1998	Nippon Ichi, Atlus USA	Nippon Ichi	RPG	Fantasy	M		Tenspei Sato	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4		Japan
Richard Garriott's Tabula Rasa	2007	Ncssoft	Ncssoft	MMORPG, Action	Sci-Fi	M,M,M,M,M		Chris Vreenna, Clint Walsh, Curse Mackey, Tracy W. Bush	Windows	4	Tabula Rasa	USA
Rideggar: Guybrave	1997	Avela	Avela	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	M		Kazuo Sawa	PS1	1		Japan
Rift	2011	Trion Worlds	Trion Worlds	MMORPG	Fantasy	M		Iron Zur	Windows	1		USA
Rifts: Promise of Power	2009	Nokia	Backbone	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	M		Chris Resanson	N-Gage	1		USA
Rise Runner: Flight of the Sages	2013	Triple & Titles	Triple & Titles	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	M		Enrique Dryere	Windows	1		USA
Rise of Lost Empires	2007	Gameloft S.A.	Gameloft Iberica S.A.	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy				iTune, iOS	2		France
Risen	2009	Deep Silver	Piranha Bytes	Action RPG	Fantasy	M		Kai Rosenkranz	Windows, X360	2	Risen	Germany
Risen 2: Dark Waters	2012	Deep Silver	Piranha Bytes, Wizarbox	Action RPG	Fantasy	M		Kai Rosenkranz	Windows, X360, PS3	3	Risen	Germany
River Realms	1998	Digital Integration	Activ Pub Studios	RTS, RPG, Strategy	Fantasy				Windows	1		UK
River King: A Wonderful Journey	2005	Marvelous Interactive Inc.	Marvelous Interactive Inc.	Simulation, Sports, RPG	Anime, Modern				PS2	2	River King	Japan
Riviera: The Promised Land	2002	Bandai	Sting	RPG	Fantasy			Minako Adachi, Hisashi Okamoto, Shigeki Hayashi, Kiyotaka Satou, Shintarou Hirakawa, Kiyohiro Sada, Takuya Yokota, Kôhei Matsuoaka	F,M,M,M,M,M,M,M	8	Wonderswan Color, GBA, PSP	Japan
RIZ: DOA:MD (The Wizard of Oz: Beyond the Yellow Brick Road)	2008	43 Publisher	Media Vision	RPG	Fantasy	M,F,M		Hitoshi Sakimoto, Michiko Naruko, Masaharu Iwata	Nintendo DS	3	The Wizard of Oz	Japan
Road Trip	2002	Conspiracy Entertainment Corp.	E-game Inc	Racing, RPG	Modern			Fumio Tanabe	PS2	1		Japan
Robin Hood	2001	EA, Light & Shadow Production	Planet Interactive	Action RPG	Fantasy	M		Mark Cooksey	GBC	1	Robin Hood	USA
Robot Ponkattsu: Moon Version	1999	Atlus USA, Hudson Soft	Will Co.	RPG	Sci-Fi	X		Studio Guido	GBC	1	Robot Ponkattsu	Japan
Robot Ponkattsu: Star Version	1998	Atlus USA, Hudson Soft	Will Co.	RPG	Sci-Fi	X		Studio Guido	GBC	1	Robot Ponkattsu	Japan
Robot Ponkattsu: Sun Version	1998	Atlus USA, Hudson Soft	Will Co.	RPG	Sci-Fi	X		Studio Guido	GBC	1	Robot Ponkattsu	Japan
Rockman EXE 4.5 Real Operation	2004	Capcom	Capcom	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	F,M		Alkari Kaida, Toshitaka Horiyama	GBA	2	Rockman EXE	Japan
Rogue Galaxy	2005	Sony Computer Entertainment	Level-5	RPG	Sci-Fi	M		Tomohito Nishiura	PS2	1		Japan
Rohan: Blood Feud (Rohan Online)	2008	YNK Interactive	YNK Korea	MMORPG	Fantasy	X		Developed Internally	Windows	1	Rohan	South Korea
Romance wa Tsunagi no Kagiyaki II	2002	Kadokawa Shoten	Fairy Tale	RPG	Anime, Fantasy				PS1	1		Japan
Ronde	1997	Atlus	Atlus	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	M,M		Matayoshi Ichi, Michihiro Nomura	Saturn	2	Majin Tensei	Japan
Rondo of Swords	2007	Atlus	Success	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	M,M		Atsushi Fukae, Tatsuya Fujiwara	Nintendo DS	2		Japan
ROSE Online	2005	Gravity Interactive, Faith Inc.	Triggersoft	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		USA
RPG Maker	1997	Agatec	Kuusoukagaku Corp	RPG	Fantasy	X		soundtrich	PS1	1	RPG Maker	Japan
RPG Quest: Minima	2011	PIXL Games	PIXL Games	RPG	Fantasy				Android, iOS, Mac OS X	3		Canada
Rubies of Eventide	2003	Cyber Warrior	Cyber Warrior	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		USA
Rune Factory 2: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	2008	Natsume Inc.	Neverland	Action RPG	Fantasy	F		Tomoko Morita	Nintendo DS	1	Rune Factory	Japan
Rune Factory 3	2010	Natsume Inc.	Neverland	Action RPG	Fantasy	M		Joe Rinole	Nintendo DS	1	Rune Factory	Japan
Rune Factory 4	2012	Marvelous USA, XSEED Games	Neverland Co.	Simulation, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	F		Tomoko Morita	3DS	1		Japan
Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	2006	Marvelous Interactive, Natsume, Rising Star Games	Neverland Co.	Simulation, RPG	Fantasy	F		Tomoko Morita	Nintendo DS	1	Rune Factory	Japan

Rune Factory: Frontier	2008	Marvelous Interactive Inc.	Neverland Co.	Simulation, Adventure, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Tomoko Morita	F		1	Wii		1	Rune Factory	Japan
Rune Factory: Tides of Destiny	2012	Marvelous Entertainment	Neverland Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Tomoko Morita	F		2	PS3, Wii		2		Japan
Rune Jade	2000	Hudson Soft	Hudson Soft	Online RPG	Fantasy					Dreamcast		1		Japan
Runes of Magic	2009	Gameforge	Runewaker Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy	Runewalker Entertainment	X		1	Windows		1		China
RuneScape	2003	Jagex	Jagex	MMORPG	Fantasy	Michael Manning, Adam Bond	M,M		2	Windows, Browser		2		UK
Runesword 2	2003	Shrapnel Games	CrossCut Games	RPG	Fantasy					Windows		2	Runesword	USA
Rurouni Kenshin: Meiji Kenkaku Romantan: Jiyūshi Inbō Hen	1997	SCE	Pandora Box	RPG	Fantasy	Noriyuki Asakura, Makoto Kawamoto	M,F		2	PS1		1	Rurouni Kenshin	Japan
Ryu Hearts	2013	Windysoft, Perfect World, Sega, Kunlei	Stairway Games	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		1	Windows		1		South Korea
Ryū: Path of the Emperor	2005	Planetwide Games	Gamesoft, Ysraeland Digital Co.	MMORPG, Action	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		1	Windows		1		South Korea
Ryū ga Gotoku: Kenzan!	2008	Sega	Amusement Vision	Action RPG	Modern, Martial Arts	Hideomi Shoji, Hideki Sakamoto, Hiroyoshi Kato, Katsuke Ito, Yuri Fukuda	M,M,M,M,F		5	PS3		1	Ryū ga Gotoku	Japan
S2: Silent Storm	2003	Encore Inc.	Nival Interactive	Strategy, RPG	Historical, War	Andrey Fedorenko	M		1	Windows		1		Russia
Sabres of Infinity	2013	Hosted Games	Paul Wang	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	NO MUSIC				Android, Browser-based, iOS		9		Canada
Sacred	2004	Encore, Take-Two	Ascaron	Action RPG	Fantasy	Oeg Winderlich	M		1	Windows		1	Sacred	Germany
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	2008	Cdv Software Entertainment, Deep Silver	Ascaron	Action RPG	Fantasy	Dynamedion, Blind Guardian, Pedro Macedo Camacho	X,X,M		3	Windows, X360, PS3		3	Sacred	Germany
Sacred Blaze	2009	Bangrest	High-Plan	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Takashi Okamoto, Tomohiro Sumikama	M,M		2	PS2		1		Japan
Sacrifice	2000	Interplay Entertainment	Shiny Entertainment	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Kevin Manthei	M		1	Windows, Mac OS X		2	Sacrifice	USA
SaGa Frontier	1997	SCE	Square	RPG	Sci-Fi	Kenji Ito	M		1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita		4	SaGa	Japan
SaGa Frontier 2	1999	Square	Square	RPG	Fantasy	Masaaki Hamanau	M		1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita		4	SaGa Frontier	Japan
Sakuya: Journey West	1999	KOEI Co	Fu-Qi	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Masayoshi Sasaki, Yukihide Takekawa	M,M		2	PS1, PSP, PS3		3		Japan
Sakura Taisen 3: Pari wa Moeteiru ka	2003	Sega	Red, Overworks	Tactical RPG	Steampunk, Anime	Kohei Tanaka	M		1	DC, Windows		2	Sakura Taisen (Wars)	Japan
Sakura Taisen 4: Koi Seyo, Otome	2002	Sega	Overworks, Red Company Corporation	Adventure, RPG, Strategy	Steampunk	Kohei Tanaka	M		1	Dreamcast, Windows		2	Sakura Taisen	Japan
Sakura Taisen 5: Saraba, Hoshiki Hito yo (Sakura Wars So Long My Love)	2005	Sega	Sega	Dating Sim, Tactical RPG	Steampunk, Alternate Reality, Fantasy	Kohei Tanaka	M		1	PS2, Wii		2	Sakura Taisen	Japan
Salem	2012	Paradox Interactive	Seatrice, Mortal Moments	MMORPG	Fantasy	Kevin Studevant, Jimmy Sudekum	M,M		2	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux		3		Sweden
Samurai Legend Musashi	2005	Square Enix	Square Enix	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Masaaki Hamanau, Junya Nakano, Takayuki Iwai, Yuki Iwai	M,M,M,F		4	PS2		1		Japan
Sands of Destruction	2008	Sega	Imageepoch	RPG	Sci-Fi	Yasunori Mitsuda, Shunsuke Tsuchiya, Kazumi Mitome	M,M,M		2	Nintendo DS		1	Sands of Destruction	Japan
Sangokushi Online	2008	Koei	Koei	MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy					Windows		1	Romance of the Three Kingdoms	Japan
Savage 2: A Tortured Soul	2008	S2 Games	S2 Games	Strategy, Action RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi, Post-Apocalyptic	Arney Secenradic	M		1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux		1	Savage	USA
Scarlet Blade	2012	Aeria Games	Liveplex	MMORPG	Post-Apocalyptic, Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		1	Windows		1		South Korea
Science Girls!	2009	Hanako Games	Spiky Caterpillar	RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy	Pierrot Lunaire, Battlers Software, Kou-G, Sound Optimise	M,X,X,X		4	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux		3		USA
Schools of Fate (Yulgang)	2005	Netgame, Mgame	mGame	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		1	Windows		1		South Korea
Scotland Yard	1998	Cryo Interactive	Ravensburger Interactive Media	Strategy, RPG	Mystery	Eric Las	M		1	Windows		1		Germany
SD Gundam G Generation Advance	2003	Bandai	Vanguard Works	RPG, Strategy	Sci-Fi	Daisuke Inoue	M		1	GBA		1	Gundam	Japan
SD Gundam G Generation Gather Beat 2	2003	Bandai	Bandai	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi					Wonderswan Color		1	Gundam	Japan
SD Gundam G Generation: Gather Beat	2000	Bandai	Bandai	Tactical RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi					Wonderswan		1	Gundam	Japan
SD Gundam G Generation: Monocore Gundams	2002	Bandai	Bandai	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi					Wonderswan Color		2	Gundam	Japan
SD Gundam G Generation-0	1999	Bandai	Bandai	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi					PS1		1	SD Gundam	Japan
SD Gundam G Generation-F	2000	Bandai	Bandai	Tactical RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi					PS1		1	Gundam	Japan
SD Gundam G Generation-F J.F	2003	Bandai	Bandai	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi					PS1		1	Gundam	Japan
Sea Dogs	2000	Bethesda	Sea Dog	Strategy, Action RPG	Historical, Naval	Yury Potemkin	M		1	Windows		2	Sea Dogs	Russia
Seal of Evil	2004	Strategy First Inc.	Object Software Limited	Action RPG	Fantasy	Brahma Studios	X		1	Windows		1		China
Seal Online	2003	YNK Interactive	Grigon Games, YNK Games	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		1	Windows		1		South Korea
Seal: Travelers of Destiny	2000	Kama Digital	Saram & Saram	RPG	Fantasy	Hwang JoEun	M		1	Windows		1		South Korea
Second Life	2003	Linden Research Inc.	Linden Research Inc.	MMORPG, Simulation	Modern					Windows, Mac OS X, Linux		3		USA
Segapapa	2003	Sega	Hitmaker, Thunder Stone Japan, Inc.	RPG	Parody	Tsuyoshi Kanelo	M		1	Dreamcast		1		Japan
Seikenki Rayblade	2000	Winkysoft	Winkysoft	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Tatsuya Fujiwara, Yoshihiro Inada	M,F		2	Dreamcast, PS1		2		Japan
Septerra Core: Legacy of the Creator	1999	Monolith Productions	Valkyrie Studios	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Martin O'Donnell, Michael Salvatori	M,M		2	Windows, Macintosh, Linux		3		USA
Sergei's Destiny	2003	Robin Gravel	Robin Gravel	Adventure, RPG	Fantasy					DO5		1		USA
Serious Sam: The Random Encounter	2013	Croteam Ltd., Devolver Digital	Vlamber	RPG	Sci-Fi					Windows		1	Serious Sam	Netherlands
Seven: Moimorth no Kihelai	2000	Namco	Namco	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Masako Ōgami, Yoshinori Kawamoto, Tomoko Tatsuta, Hiroshi Ōkubo	F,M,F,M		4	PS2		1		Japan
Seventh Cross Evolution	1998	UFO Interactive Games	HuneX Co	RPG, Simulation	Sci-Fi	Yayoi Okumura	F		1	Dreamcast		1		Japan
Shachō Eiyaden: The Eagle Shooting Heroes	2000	Sony Computer Entertainment	Sony Computer Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy					PS1		1		Japan
Shadow Company: Left for Dead	1999	Ubisoft	Snister Games	Tactical RPG	Modern, Fighting	Jeffrey Komar	M		1	Windows		1		USA
Shadow Hearts	2003	Aruze, Midway, Bandai Namco Entertainment	Sacnoth	RPG	Alternate Reality, Fantasy	Yoshitaka Hirota, Yasunori Mitsuda	M,M		2	PS2		1	Shadow Hearts	Japan
Shadow Hearts: Covenant	2003	Aruze Corp.	Nautilus	RPG	Historical, War, Fantasy	Yasunori Mitsuda, Kenji Ito	M,M		2	PS2		1	Shadow Hearts	Japan
Shadow Hearts: Covenant (Shadow Hearts II)	2004	Aruze Midway	Nautilus	RPG	Alternate Reality, Fantasy	Yoshitaka Hirota, Yasunori Mitsuda, Kenji Ito	M,M,M		2	PS2		2	Shadow Hearts	Japan
Shadow Hearts: From the New World	2005	Aruze, XSEED, Ghostlight	Nautilus	RPG	Historical, Fantasy	Yoshitaka Hirota	M		1	PS2		1	Shadow Hearts	Japan
Shadow Madness	1999	Crave Entertainment	Craveyard Studios	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Brad Spear	M		1	PS1		1		USA
Shadow Tower	1998	FromSoftware	FromSoftware	Action RPG	Horror, Fantasy	Keiichiro Segawa	M		1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita		4	Shadow Tower	Japan
Shadow Tower: Abyss	2003	FromSoftware	FromSoftware	Action RPG	Horror, Fantasy	Yukinori Takada, Tsukasa Satō, Kōta Hoshino, Yūki Ichikō, Yūji Kanda	M,M,M,M,M		5	PS2		2	Shadow Tower	Japan
Shadow Vault	2004	Strategy First	Mayhem	Tactical RPG	Post-Apocalyptic, Cyberpunk	Lubomir Ruttkay	M		1	Windows		1		USA
Shadowbane	2003	En-Trans Entertainment, Ubisoft	Wolfpack Studios	MMORPG	Fantasy	Leahy Scott, George Atkies, Sanger, Mason B. Fisher, Christian Slayter, David Arkenstone, Chris Gates, Julia Botbol	M,M,M,M,M,M,F		7	Windows, Mac OS X		2		USA
ShadowWarc: Episode One	2002	EnuraSoft Inc.	Denysoft Co. Ltd.	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tama, Masato Arakawa	F,M		2	Windows		1		Japan
Shadowrun Returns	2013	Harebrained Schemes	Harebrained Schemes	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Marshall Parker, Sam Powell, Jon Everist	M,M,M		3	Android		5		USA
Shady O'Grady's Rising Star	2007	Gillgames	Gillgames	Simulation, RPG, Strategy	Modern, Music					Windows		1		USA

Shayia	2007	Aeria Games, CDC Games	Sonov Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		1	Windows	1		South Korea
Shaman King: Master of Spirits	2004	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Toshihisa Furusawa	M		1	GBA	1		Japan
Shaman King: Master of Spirits 2	2005	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Toshihisa Furusawa, Maki Kirioka	M,F		2	GBA	1		Japan
Shaman King: Power of Spirit	2004	Konami	Winky Soft Co.	Strategy, Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Tatsuya Fujiwara	M		1	PS2	1		Japan
ShaoLin	1999	THQ	Polygon Magic	Action RPG	Fighting	Maashiko Hagio, Masayuki Maruyama	M,M		2	PS1	1		Japan
Shattered Light	1999	Simon & Schuster Interactive	Catware Inc.	RPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		USA
Shengdi zhi Ge: Heroine Anthem - The Elect of W...	2002	WindThunder		RPG	Anime, Fantasy					Windows	1		China
Shengdi zhi Ge: Heroine Anthem II - The Angel o...	2003	Unistar	WindThunder	RPG	Anime, Fantasy					Windows	1		China
Shfers	2002	The 3DO Company	The 3DO Company	Action RPG	Fantasy	Barry Blum	M		1	PS2	1		USA
Shin Megami Tensei I...	2002	Atlus Co. Ltd.	Atlus Co. Ltd.	RPG	Cyberpunk	Masaki Kurokawa, Kenichi Tsuchiya, Tsukasa Masuko, Hidehito Aoki	M,M,M,M		4	PS1, PS3, PSP, PS Vita	4		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei II	2002	Atlus Co. Ltd.	Atlus Co. Ltd.	RPG	Cyberpunk	Tsukasa Masuko	M		1	PS, GBA, iOS, Android	4		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei III: Nocturne	2003	Atlus, Ghostlight, Ubisoft	Atlus	RPG	Modern, Fantasy	Shoji Meguro, Toshiko Tsaki, Kenichi Tsuchiya	M,F,M		3	PS2	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei IV	2013	Atlus	Atlus	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Ryota Koduka, Kenichi Tsuchiya, Toshiki Konishi	M,M,M		3	3DS	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei Nine	2002	Atlus Co. Ltd.	NexTech Corporation	Action RPG	Cyberpunk	Masaki Kurokawa, Kenichi Tsuchiya	M,M		2	Xbox	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Aka no Sho	2000	Atlus	Access Co., Multimedia, Intelligence Transfer	Monster Raising, RPG	Fantasy, Supernatural	Tomoyuki Hamada, Hiro Takahashi, Achilles C. Damigos	M,M,M		3	GB, Nintendo DS	2		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Black Book	2001	Atlus	MIT	RPG, Monster Raising	Fantasy	Tomoyuki Hamada, Hiro Takahashi, Achilles C. Damigos	M,M,M		3	GB	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Kuro no Sho	2000	Atlus	Atlus	Monster Raising, RPG	Fantasy, Supernatural	Tomoyuki Hamada, Hiro Takahashi, Achilles C. Damigos	M,M,M		3	PS1, PS3, PSP, PS Vita	4		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - Red Book	2001	Atlus	MIT	RPG, Monster Raising	Fantasy	Tomoyuki Hamada, Hiro Takahashi, Achilles C. Damigos	M,M,M		3	GB	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children - White Book	2001	Atlus	MIT	RPG, Monster Raising	Fantasy	Tomoyuki Hamada, Hiro Takahashi, Achilles C. Damigos	M,M,M		3	GB	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner 2 - Raidou Kuzunoha vs. King	2009	Atlus	Atlus	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy, Mystery	Shoji Meguro	M		1	PS3, PS3	2		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner: Raidou Kuzunoha vs. The Soulless Army	2006	Atlus, Koei	Atlus	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Shoji Meguro	M		1	PS2	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner: Soul Hackers	1997	Atlus, NIS America	Atlus	RPG	Fantasy	Shoji Meguro, Toshiko Tsaki, Tsukasa Masuko	M,F,M		3	Saturn, PS1, 3DS	3		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga	2004	Atlus, Ghostlight	Atlus	RPG	Fantasy	Shoji Meguro, Kenichi Tsuchiya	M,M		2	PS2	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga 2	2005	Atlus, Ghostlight	Atlus	RPG	Fantasy	Shoji Meguro, Kenichi Tsuchiya	M,M		2	PS2	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Imagine	2007	Atlus	Cave	MMORPG	Fantasy	Kenichi Kikkawa	M		1	Windows	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne	2004	Atlus	Atlus	RPG	Post-Apocalyptic, Anime, Fantasy	Shoji Meguro	M		1	PS2	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 2 - Innocent Sin	2013	Atlus	Atlus	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Toshiko Tsaki, Kenichi Tsuchiya, Masaki Kurokawa, hitomi, Shoji Meguro, Ryota Koduka, Atsushi Kitajoh, Toshiki Konishi, Maki Ohtsuka	F,M,M,F,M,M,M,M,F		9	PSP	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3	2006	Atlus, Koei, THQ	Atlus	RPG	Alternate Reality, Fantasy	Shoji Meguro	M		1	PS2	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 4	2008	Atlus	Atlus	RPG	Alternate Reality, Fantasy	Shoji Meguro, Atsushi Kitajoh	M,M		2	PS2	1		Japan
Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey	2010	Atlus	Atlus, Lancarse	RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Shoji Meguro	M		1	Nintendo DS	1		Japan
Shining Force EXA	2007	Sega	Neverland	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tomoko Morita	F		1	PS2	1		Japan
Shining Force III	1997	SEGA	Camelot Software, Sonic Co.	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M		1	Saturn	1		Japan
Shining Force Neo	2005	Sega	Neverland, Amusement Vision	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tomoko Morita, Yukio Nakajima	F,M		2	PS2	1		Japan
Shining Force: Neo	2005	Sega	Neverland Co., Pyramid Inc.	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Shin Sagisu, Tomoko Morita, Yukio Nakajima	M,F,M		3	PS2	1		Japan
Shining Force: Resurrection of the Dark Dragon	2004	Atlus	Amusement Vision	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Nasufumi Tsunoyama, Takuya Hanaka, Ipppei Amano	M,M,M		3	GBA	1		Japan
Shining Soul	2002	Atlus	Nex	Action RPG	Fantasy	Shingo Yasumoto	M		1	GBA	1		Japan
Shining Soul II	2003	Sega, Atlus, THQ	Sega, Graushopper	Action RPG	Fantasy	Masafumi Takada	M		1	GBA	1		Japan
Shining Tears	2004	Sega	Nentech, Amusement Vision	Action RPG	Fantasy	Sochiro Hoshi	M		1	PS2	1		Japan
Shining Wind	2007	Sega	Nentech	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kaoru Okada, Nonyasu Agetsuma	F,M		2	PS2	1		Japan
Shinki Genso: Spectral Souls	2003	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Kaneiko, Kenichi Kikkawa	M,M		2	PS2	1		Japan
Shin's Denso: Crystania	1997	SystemSoft	SystemSoft	RPG	Fantasy					PC-98	1		Japan
Shin's Denso: Spectral Souls II (Spectral Souls: Resurrection of the Ethereal Empires)	2005	Idea Factory	Neverland	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Kaneiko, Kenichi Kikkawa	M,M		2	PS2, PSP	2		Japan
Shinseiki Yuusha Taisen	2005	Atlus	Takara	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Yoshiyuki Nozaki, Kazuhiro Uchida, Yasunori Nakai, Kyoko Nakai, Yoshio Shimizu, Jojojojo Kitajoh	F,F,M,M,F,M,M		7	PS1, Neo Geo CD, Saturn	3		Japan
Shinsetsu Samurai Spirits: Bushido Stetsuden	1997	SNK Corporation	SNK Corporation	Action RPG	Historical, Fantasy					Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, Android, Browser-based, iOS	6		Philippines
Shonen the Wanderer	2010	Atlus	Chunsoft	RPG	Fantasy	Kiuchi Sugiyama	M		1	Wii	1		USA
Shou Online	2008	Lizard Interactive	Lizard Interactive	MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy					Windows	1		China
Si Da Ming Bu	1998	Zhenggu Software	Zhenggu Software	RPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		China
Siege of Avalon	2000	Global Star Software	Digital Tame	Action RPG	Fantasy	Rigm A. Lynne, Carl Joseph Leon	M,M		2	Windows	1		Norway
Sigma Star Saga	2005	Namco	WayForward	Action RPG	Fantasy	Shin'en	X		1	GBA	1		USA
Silent Storm	2003	1C Company, JoWood, Encore	Nival	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi, Historical	Andrey Fedorenko	M		1	Windows	1		Russia
Silent Storm: Sentinels	2004	1C Company, JoWood	Nival	Tactical RPG	Historical, Sci-Fi	Andrey Fedorenko, Georg Eimin	M,M		2	Windows	1		Russia
Silkroad Online	2005	Yahool Korea, Joymax	Joymax	MMORPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		South Korea
Silkroad-R (Silkroad Online)	2012	Yahool Korea, Joymax	Joymax	MMORPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		South Korea
Silver	1999	Infogrames	Infogrames UK	RPG	Fantasy	Dean Evans	M		1	Dreamcast	4		UK
Silverfall	2007	Monte Cristo, Atari	Monte Cristo, Kyiv's Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yannickéon, Markus Schmidt, Alexander Röder, Alex Pfeffer, Tilman Sillescu	X,M,M,M,M		5	Windows	1		France
Slies of Arcadia	2000	Overworks	Sega	RPG	Fantasy	Dutaka Minobe, Tatsuyuki Maeda	M,M		2	Dreamcast	1		Japan
Slammed!	2013	Choice of Games	Choice of Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Modern, Sports	NO MUSIC				Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, Android, Browser-based, iOS	6		Philippines
Slapshot	2009	Nival Online	Nurim Entertainment	Sports, RPG	Modern, Sports					Windows	1		South Korea
Slaves to Armok: God of Blood - Chapter II: Dwarf Fortress	2008	Bay 12 Games	Bay 12 Games	Simulation, Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Tam Adams	M		1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		USA
Slayers Wonderful	1998	Bangresto Co	TamTam	RPG	Fantasy					PS1	1		Japan
Sniper: Path of Vengeance	2002	Kicat Interactive	Mirage Interactive LLC	FPS, Action RPG	Modern, Crime	Doyle W. Donehoo, Tomasz Kurjata	M,M		2	Windows	1		Poland
SNK vs. Capcom: Card Fighters' Clash - Capcom C...	1999	SNK of America	SNK Corporation	Tactical RPG	Fighting	Takushi Hiyanuta, Mitsuo, Miwa	M,F,F		3	Neo Geo Pocket Color	1		Japan
SNK vs. Capcom: Card Fighters' Clash - SNK Card...	1999	SNK of America	SNK Corporation	Tactical RPG	Fighting	Takushi Hiyanuta, Mitsuo, Miwa	M,F,F		3	Neo Geo Pocket Color	1		Japan

Solatorobo: Red the Hunter	2011	KSEED Games	Cyber Connect 2	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Chiayo Fukuda	F	1	Nintendo DS	1	Japan
Solid Runner	1997	ASCII Corp	Ring	RPG	Sci-Fi	Mitsuhito Tanaka, Toshiaki Sakoda	M,M	2	SNES	1	Japan
Sonic Chronicles: The Dark Brotherhood	2009	Sega	Bloware	Action RPG	Fantasy	Steven Sim, Richard Jacques	M,M	2	Nintendo DS	1	Canada
Sorcerian Forever	1997	Nihon Falcom	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yuzo Koshiro, Mieko Ishikawa, Reiko Takebayashi, Hideya Nagata, Takahito Abe	M,F,F,M,M	5	Windows	1	Sorcerian
Sorcerian Original	2000	Nihon Falcom	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Shijirō Watanabe	M	1	Windows	1	Sorcerian
Sorcerian: Shichisei Mahō no Shito	2000	Vector Interactive	EXE-Create, media JoGGLER	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Falcom Sound Team J.D.K.	X	1	Dreamcast	1	Sorcerian
Sorcery Saga: Curse of the Great Curry God	2013	Compile Heart, Akys Games, Rising Star Games	ZeroDiv, Compile Heart	Dungeon Crawler, Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Yoh Ohyama, Yasuhiko Tachibana, Yosuke Kurokawa, Kaori Tsutsui, Syntaro Jimbo, Kunhiro Izumi, Toshiaki Katoh, Toshimichi Ise, Ikuo Ebata	M,M,M,F,M,M,M,M,F	9	PS Vita	1	Japan
Sorcery!	2013	Inkle	Inkle	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	David Wise	M	1	Android, iOS	2	UK
Soul Nomad & the World Eaters	2007	Nippon Ichi	Nippon Ichi	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Tetsuji Sato	M	1	PS2	1	Japan
Soul of the Ultimate Nation	2007	Webzen, The9, GameOn, NHN, Ingamba	Webzen	MMORPG	Fantasy	Howard Shore	M	1	Windows	1	South Korea
Soulbringer	2000	Interplay Entertainment	Infogrames	Action RPG	Fantasy	Patrick Phelan	M	1	Windows	1	USA
Space Hack	2004	Meridian4	Rebelmind	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Przemysław Danowski, Jarosław Siwiński	M,M	2	Windows	1	Poland
Space Heroes Universal	2011	Bubble Gum Interactive	Bubble Gum Interactive	MMORPG	Sci-Fi, Superheroes				Browser-based	1	Australia
Space Miner: Space Ore Bust	2010	Venat Entertainment	Venat Entertainment	Action RPG	Sci-Fi				iOS	1	USA
Space Rangers	2002	1C Company	Elemental	Adventure, RPG, Strategy	Sci-Fi	K-O Music, Grigory Semenov, Denis Korzhavin, Pavel Stebakov, Ekaterina Kartakova	X,M,M,M,M,F	5	Windows	1	Russia
Space Rangers 2: Dominators	2004	Excalibur, 1C Company, Cinemaware	Elemental	Adventure, RPG, Strategy	Sci-Fi	Nikita Maledentkov	M	1	Windows	1	Russia
Space Siege	2008	Sega	Gas Powered Games	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	David Arkenstone	M	1	Windows	1	USA
Spaceforce: Captains	2007	JoWood Productions	Proxox Games	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Dynamedion, Björn A. Lynne	X,M	2	Windows	1	Croatia
Spaceforce: Rogue Universe	2007	DreamCatcher Interactive	Proxox Games	Simulation, Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Dino Potrebica, Björn A. Lynne, Paweł Błażczak, Damian TurmBał, Młobinski Thomas	M,M,M,M,M	5	Windows	1	Croatia
Spacefury Force	2008	KarjaSoft	KarjaSoft	RPG	Superheroes, Comedy	BAudio.com	X	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	1	Sweden
SPAZ: Space Pirates and Zombies	2012	MinMax Games	MinMax Games	Strategy, Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Arteria Music	X	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	1	Canada
Spectral Force 3: Innocent Rage	2006	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Kameko	M	1	X360	1	Japan
Spectral Force Chronicle	2005	Idea Factory, XPEC Entertainment	Idea Factory, XPEC Entertainment	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kenji Kameko, Riyuji Iuchi, T's Music	M,M,X	3	PS2	1	Japan
Spectral Force: Chronicle	2005	Idea Factory	Neverland	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Kameko	M	1	PS2	1	Japan
Spectral Force: Radical Elements	2004	Idea Factory	Neverland	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Kameko	M	1	PS2	1	Japan
Spectral Gate	2007	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Yuki Sugura	M	1	PS2	1	Japan
Spectral Souls: Resurrection of the Ethernal Empire	2005	Idea Factory	Idea Factory	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy				PS2, PSP, Android, iOS	1	Japan
Spectrobes: Beyond the Portals	2008	Disney Interactive Studios	Jupiter Corp.	Action RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Maashiko Kimura	M	1	Nintendo DS	1	Japan
Spellforce 2: Shadow Wars	2006	Aspyr Media, JoWood Productions Software	Phenomic Game Development	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Tilman Sillescu, Pierre Gerwig Langer, Conny Kaliet	M,M,M	3	Windows	1	Germany
Spellforce: The Order of Dawn	2003	Encore Inc.	Phenomic Game Development	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Dynamedion Sounddesign	X	1	Windows	1	Germany
Spells of Gold	2002	Buka Entertainment	Jonquil Software	RPG	Fantasy	Andrew Burnistrow	M	1	Windows	1	Russia
Spiral Knights	2009	Sega	Three Rings Design	MMORPG	Fantasy	Harry Mack	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	1	USA
Spirit Tales	2011	KoramGame	X-Legend	Monster Raising, MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	China
Spore	2008	EA	Maxis Software	Simulation, Strategy, Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Cliff Martinez, Brian Eno	M,M	2	Windows, Mac OS X	1	USA
Spyro: Shadow Legacy	2005	Sierra Entertainment	Amaze Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Novel Gabriel	M	1	Nintendo DS	1	USA
Star Hearts: Hoshi to Dachi no Shisha	2001	Bandai	Bandai	Action RPG	Fantasy				Wonderswan Color	1	Japan
Star Ocean: Blue Sphere	2001	Enix	tri-Ace	RPG	Sci-Fi	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	GBC, Mobile	1	Japan
Star Ocean: The Last Hope	2009	Square Enix	tri-Ace	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	X360, PS3	1	Japan
Star Ocean: The Second Story	1998	ICE	tri-Ace	Action RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	PS1	1	Japan
Star Ocean: Till the End of Time	2003	Square Enix	tri-Ace	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	PS2	1	Japan
Star Trek Online	2010	Perfect World Entertainment	Cryptic Studios	Third Person Shooter, MMORPG	Sci-Fi	Kevin Maantel	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	1	USA
Star Wars: Galaxies	2003	LucasArts	Sony Online Entertainment	Action, MMORPG	Sci-Fi	John Williams, Anna Karney	M,F	2	Windows	1	USA
Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic	2003	LucasArts	Bloware	RPG	Sci-Fi	Jeremy Soule	M	1	Windows, Xbox	1	Canada
Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic II - The Sith Lords	2004	LucasArts	Obsidian	RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Mark Griskey	M	1	Xbox, Windows, OS X, Linux	1	USA
Star Wars: The Old Republic	2011	EA	Bloware	MMORPG	Sci-Fi	Mark Griskey, Jesse Martin, Lennie Moore, Gordy Haab, Wilbert Roght II, Peter McConnell, Steve Kirk, Jared Emerson Johnson	M,M,M,M,M,M,M,M	8	Windows	1	Canada
Star Wolves	2004	1C Company, Excalibur, Micro Application	Xbow	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Max Kachanoff, Artem Kolpakov	M,M	2	Windows	1	Russia
Star Wolves 2	2006	1C Company	Xbow	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Vladimir Orsharenko, Sergey Perekrstov, Vasily Korneyev	M,M,M	3	Windows	1	Russia
Starbound	2013	Chucklefish	Chucklefish	Adventure, Action RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Curtis Schweitzer, Solarsun	M,M	2	Windows, Mac OS X	1	UK
Starpoint Gemini	2011	Iceberg Interactive	Little Green Men Games	Simulation, Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Vlado Sabev, Natasia Olivan, Nikola Barovic, Tomislav Mihokovic	M,F,M,M	4	Windows	1	Croatia
StarQuest Online	2007	NeXeon Technologies	NeXeon Technologies	MMORPG	Sci-Fi				Windows	1	USA
Starling Odyssey 1: Blue Evolution	1999	RayForce	RayForce	RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Hiroshi Miyagawa	M	1	PS1	1	Japan
State of Decay	2013	Microsoft Game Studios	Undead Labs	Stealth, survival horror, RPG	Horror	Jesper Kyd	M	1	Windows, X360	1	USA
Steam Pirates	2010	Fried Green Apps	Fried Green Apps	RPG	Fantasy	Sean Beeson, Pontus Ruffelt	M,M	2	iOS	1	USA
Steins;Gate	2009	Spb., JAST USA, Nitroplus, Pqube, Kadowaka Shoten	Spb., Nitroplus	Visual Novel, Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Takeshi Abo	M	1	Windows, X360, PSP, PS3, PS Vita, iOS, Android	1	Japan
Steins;Gate: Linear Bounded Phenogram (Seiki Kōkoku no Phenogram)	2013	Spb., Digital Touch, Zakobot	Nitroplus, Spb.	Visual Novel, Action RPG	Modern, Sci-Fi				PS3, PS Vita, X360	1	Japan
Stella Deus: The Gate of Eternity	2004	Ailus, IDS, GameStreet	Pinegrove	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Sakimoto, Masaharu Iwata	M,M	2	PS2	1	Japan
Sudoki	2004	Microsoft Game Studios, Zoo Digital Publishing	Climax	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tom Cohen	M	1	Xbox, Windows	1	USA
Suikoden II	1998	Konami	Konami	RPG	Fantasy	Miki Higashino	F	1	Windows, PS1, PS3, PS Vita	1	Japan
Suikoden III	2002	Konami	Konami	RPG	Fantasy	Michiru Yamane, Takashi Yoshida, Masahiko Kimura	F,M,M	3	PS2	1	Japan
Suikoden IV	2004	Konami	Konami	RPG	Fantasy	Masahiko Kimura, Michiru Yamane, Norikazu Miura	M,F,M	3	PS2	1	Japan
Suikoden Tactics	2005	Konami	Konami	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Norikazu Miura	M	1	PS2	1	Japan
Suikoden Treasures	2008	Konami	Konami	RPG	Fantasy	Yoshino Aoki, Norikazu Miura, Masaharu Iwata, Kaori Komuro, Hiroaki Tomuno	F,M,M,F,M	5	Nintendo DS	1	Japan

Saikuden V	2006	Konami	Konami, Hudson Soft	RPG	Fantasy	Norikazu Miura	M		1	PS2		1	Saikuden	Japan
Summon Night	2000	Banpresto	Flight Plan	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Minako Adachi	F		1	PS1		1	Summon Night	Japan
Summon Night 2	2001	Banpresto	Flight Plan	Tactical RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Chiaki Fujita	M		1	PS1, Nintendo DS		2	Summon Night	Japan
Summon Night 3	2003	Banpresto	Flight Plan	Tactical RPG	Steampunk	Chiaki Fujita	M		1	PS2		1	Summon Night	Japan
Summon Night 4	2006	Banpresto	Flight Plan	Tactical RPG	Steampunk	Minako Adachi, Masafumi Ogata	F,M		2	PS2		1	Summon Night	Japan
Summon Night Craft Sword Monogatari: Hajimari no Ishi	2005	Banpresto	Flight Plan	Action RPG	Steampunk	Minako Adachi, Seichi Kakehashi, Kôhei Matsuoka	F,M,M		3	GBA		1	Summon Night	Japan
Summon Night Ex-Theme: Yoake no Tsubasa	2009	Banpresto	Flight Plan	Action RPG	Steampunk	Kenny K, Zeal Blood, Masako Imazeki	M,M,F		3	PS2		1	Summon Night	Japan
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story	2003	Banpresto, Atlus	Flight Plan	Action RPG	Steampunk	Puresound Inc., Kiyohiro Sada, Minako Adachi, Kôhei Matsuoka	X,M,F,M		4	GBA		1	Summon Night	Japan
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story 2	2004	Banpresto, Atlus	Flight Plan	Action RPG	Steampunk	Kôhei Matsuoka	M		1	GBA		1	Summon Night	Japan
Summon Night: Twin Age	2007	Atlus	Flight Plan	Action RPG	Steampunk	Mid Club, Kengo Sakurai	X,M		2	Nintendo DS		1	Summon Night	Japan
Summoner	2000	THQ	Volition	Action RPG	Fantasy	Scott Lee	M		1	Windows, PS2, Mac OS		1	Summoner	USA
Summoner 2	2002	THQ	Volition	Action RPG	Fantasy	Dan Wentz, Franky Vivid, Kate Marlin	M,M,F		3	PS2, Gamecube		2	Summoner	USA
Sunrise Eiyuutan	1999	Sunrise	Azeller-Sai	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Yanaka, Hideyo Nakazaki, Kazuya Izum, Yoshitomi Ushima, Yasuhiko Shigemura, Tatsumi Yano	M,M,M,M,M,M		6	PS2		1	Sunrise Eiyuutan	Japan
Sunrise Eiyuutan 2	2002	Sunrise Interactive	Azeller-Sai	RPG	Fantasy							1	Sunrise Eiyuutan	Japan
Sunrise Eiyuutan 3	2006	Sunrise Interactive	ITL	RPG	Fantasy							1	Sunrise Eiyuutan	Japan
Sunrise Eiyuutan R	2000	Sunrise Interactive	Azeller-Sai	RPG	Fantasy	Shuji Ohita, Takayuki Negishi	M,M		2	PS2		1	Sunrise Eiyuutan	Japan
Super Hero Sakusen	1999	Banpresto	Banpresto	RPG	Sci-Fi	Shigeyuki Shirobo	M		1	PS1		1		Japan
Super Hero Sakusen: Dielda's Ambition	2000	Banpresto	Banpresto	RPG	RPG							1	Super Hero Sakusen	Japan
Super Panda Adventures	2013	Paul Schneider	Paul Schneider	Adventure, Action RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	James Dean	M		1	Windows		1		Germany
Super Paper Mario	2007	Nintendo	Intelligent Systems, Nintendo SPD	Action RPG, Platform, Puzzle	Fantasy	Naoko Mitome, Chika Sekigawa	F,F		2	Wii		1	Mario	Japan
Super Robot Taisen 64	1999	Banpresto	Monegi	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Michihiko Nomura	M		1	N64		1	Super Robot Taisen	Japan
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2	2005	Banpresto, Atlus	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Takuya Hanaoka, Naofumi Tsuruyama	M,M		2	GBA		1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars Advance	2001	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi							2	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars Alpha	2000	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Masashi Chizawa	M		1	PS1		1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars Alpha Gaiden	2001	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Masashi Chizawa	M		1	PS1, PSN		2	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars Compact	1999	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi							1	Super Robot Taisen	Japan
Super Robot Wars Compact 2	2000	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi							1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars Compact 3	2003	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi							1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars Destiny	2003	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi							1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars F	1997	Banpresto	Winky Soft	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Daisuke Fujimoto, Chumei Watanabe, Shinichi Tanaka	M,M,M		3	Saturn, PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita		5	Super Robot Taisen	Japan
Super Robot Wars F Final	1998	Banpresto	Winky Soft	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Chouhei Watanabe, Yoshitomi Ushima, Kazuya Amakura, Kyôtarô Tsutsumi, Asei Kobayashi, Neil Sedaka, Takeshi Ike, Shunsuke Kikuchi, Shinichi Tanaka, Hidetoshi Sato	X,M,M,M,M,M,M,M,M,M		10	Saturn, PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita,		4		Japan
Super Robot Wars GC (Super Robot Wars XO)	2004	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi							2	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars Impact	2002	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	JAM Project, Various	X,X		2	PS2		1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars Judgement	2005	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi							1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars MK	2004	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Yongie Rouno (JAM Project), Varinius Hirotsugu Kageyama, Masami Oeiz, Wataru Yukimura, Naohiro Tsuruyama, Takuya Hanaoka, Kayoko Matsushima	X,X		2	PS2		1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars Original Generation Gaiden	2007	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi							1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars R	2002	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi							2	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars Scramble Commander	2003	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi							1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars W	2007	Banpresto	Banpresto	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Kenosuke Suenmura	M		1	Nintendo DS		1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Robot Wars: Original Generation	2002	Banpresto, Atlus	Banpresto, Atlus	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Naofumi Tsuruyama, Takuya Hanaoka, Hiroshi Kikuchi	M,M,M		3	GBA		1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Super Tokusatsu Taisen 2001	2001	Banpresto	Japan Art Media		Sci-Fi							1	Super Robot Wars	Japan
Survival Kids	1999	Konami	Konami	Action RPG	Survival	Atsushi Fujio, Yasuhiro Ichikashi	M,M		2	GBC		1		Japan
Survival Project	2004	Hanbitsoft, GungHo Online Entertainment	IO Entertainment	MIMORPG	Fantasy							1		South Korea
Swashbucklers: Blue vs. Grey	2009	1C Company	Akella, TM Studios	Action RPG	Pirates	Lex Plotnikoff	M		1	Windows, PS2		2		Russia
Sword & Poker	2010	GAIA Co.	GAIA Co.	Card-based RPG	Fantasy							1	Sword & Poker	Japan
Sword & Poker II	2010	GAIA Co.	GAIA Co.	Card-based RPG	Fantasy							1	Sword & Poker	Japan
Sword of Mana	2003	Nintendo	Brownie Brown	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kenji Ito	M		1	GBA		1	Mana	Japan
Sword of Moonlight	2000	FromSoftware	FromSoftware	Action RPG	Fantasy							1	King's Field	Japan
Sword of the Samurai	2002	Ubisoft	Senki Co. Ltd., Lightweight Co. Ltd.	Action RPG	Historical							1		Japan
Sword of the Stars: The Pit	2013	Kerberos Productions	Kerberos Productions	RPG	Sci-Fi, Horror	Ben Lam	M		1	Windows		1		Canada
System Shock 2	1999	EA	Irrational Games, Looking Glass Studios	FPS, Action RPG	Cyberpunk	Josh Randall, Ramin Djwadi	M,M		2	Windows, Macintosh, Linux		3	System Shock	USA
Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis	2001	Atlus	Quest	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Sakimoto, Masaharu Iwata	M,M		2	GBA		1	Tactics Ogre	Japan
Tales of Destiny	1997	Namco Hometek	Wolf Team	Action RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Shinji Tamura	M,M		2	PS1		1	Tales of Destiny	Japan
Tales of Destiny II	2000	Namco Hometek	Namco, Production I.G.	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	David Logan	M		1	PS1, PSP		2	Tales	Japan
Tales of Eternia	2000	Namco, Ubisoft	Teletext Japan, Wolf Team	Action RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Shinji Tamura	M,M		2	PS1		1	Tales	Japan
Tales of Fandom Vol.1	2002	Namco	Namco	Action RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Shinji Tamura	M,M		2	PS1		1	Tales	Japan
Tales of Fandom Vol.2	2007	Namco Tales	Namco	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Shinji Tamura and others	M,M,X		2	PS2		1	Tales	Japan
Tales of Graces	2009	Namco Bandai	Namco Tales Studio	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Hibiki Aoyama	M,M		2	Wii, PS3		2	Tales	Japan
Tales of Hearts	2008	Namco Bandai	Namco Tales	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Hiroshi Tamura, Shinji Tamura, Kazuhiro Nakamura	M,M,M,M		4	PS Vita, Nintendo DS, iOS		1	Tales	Japan
Tales of Innocence	2007	Namco Bandai	Alfa System	Action RPG	Fantasy	Kazuhiro Nakamura	M		1	Nintendo DS		1	Tales	Japan
Tales of Innocence R	2012	Namco Bandai Games	AlfaSystem	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kazuhiro Nakamura	M		1	PS Vita		1	Tales	Japan
Tales of Legendia	2005	Namco	Namco, Team MePee	Action RPG	Fantasy	Go Shino	M		1	PS2, PS3		2	Tales	Japan
Tales of Maj Eyal	2013	Netcore Games	Netcore Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Matti Paalanen	M		1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux		3		France
Tales of Phantasia: Nanikiri Dungeon	2000	Namco	Wolf Team	RPG	Fantasy	Shinji Tamura, Motoi Sakuraba, Toshiki Aida	M,M,M		3	GBC		1	Tales	Japan

Tales of Pirates	2007	I Got Games	MDCIO	MMORPG	Fantasy, Pirates			Windows	1	Pirate King	China	
Tales of Rebirth	2004	Namco	Namco	Action RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Shingi Tamura	M,M	PS2, PS4	2	Tales	Japan	
Tales of Symphonia	2003	Namco	Namco	Action RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Shingi Tamura, Takeshi Arai	M,M,M	Gamecube	3	Tales	Japan	
Tales of Symphonia: Dawn of the New World (Knight of Ratack)	2008	Namco Bandai	Namco Tales	Action RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Shingi Tamura	M,M	Wii, PS3	2	Tales	Japan	
Tales of the Abyss	2005	Namco, Namco Bandai	Namco Tales	Action RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Shingi Tamura, Motooo Fujiwara	M,M,M	PS2	3	Tales	Japan	
Tales of the Tempest	2006	Namco Bandai	Dimpis, Namco Tales	Action RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	Nintendo DS	1	Tales	Japan	
Tales of the World: Narikiri Dungeon 2	2002	Namco	Wolf Team, Alfa System	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Shingi Tamura, Takuya Yasuda	M,M,M	GBA	3	Tales	Japan	
Tales of the World: Narikiri Dungeon 3	2005	Namco	Alfa System	Tactical RPG	Fantasy			GBA		Tales	Japan	
Tales of the World: Radiant Mythology	2006	Namco Bandai	Alfa System	Action RPG	Fantasy	Takuya Yasuda, Motoi Sakuraba, Go Shina, Kana Tanaka Yasuda, Kōsuke Kikushima, Motoi Sakuraba, Shingi Tamura, Kazuhito Nakamura, Go Shina	M,M,M,7	PSP	4	Tales	Japan	
Tales of the World: Radiant Mythology 2	2009	Namco	Alfa System	Action RPG	Fantasy		M,M,M,M,M,M	PSP	6	Tales	Japan	
Tales of the World: Summoners Lineage	2003	Namco	Namco	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Tama	F	GBA	1	Tales	Japan	
Tales of Vesperia	2008	Namco Bandai	Namco Tales	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba, Hibiki Aoyama	M,M	X360	2	Tales	Japan	
Tales of Xillia	2011	Namco Bandai Games	Namco Tales	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	PS3	1	Tales	Japan	
Tales of Xillia 2	2012	Bandai Namco Games	Bandai Namco Studios	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	PS3	1	Tales	Japan	
TalesWeaver	2003	Nexon Corporation	Softmax Co.	MMORPG, Action	Fantasy	Jin-Bae Park, Goo-Min Nam	M,M	Windows, Mac OS X	2		South Korea	
Talisman of Death	2011	Laughing Jackal	Laughing Jackal	Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	Stock Music, Sound Rangers, SoundJay	X,X,X	PS1, PSP	3		UK	
Talisman Online	2007	Miracle Castle	Miracle Castle	MMORPG	Fantasy			Windows			China	
Tao's Adventure: Curse of the Demon Seal	2006	Konami	Konami	RPG	Fantasy			Nintendo DS		1	Japan	
Tear Ring Saga: Yutona Eiyō Senki	2001	Enterbrain	Tirnanog	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	44.0 (Yoshio Ueno), Minako Seki, Hitomi Tachibana, Seichi Kyoda	M,F,F,M	PS1	4	Tear Ring Saga	Japan	
Tear Ring Series: Berwick Saga	2005	Enterbrain	Tirnanog	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi	Hiroto Saitoh, Minako Seki, 44.0, Youssuke Yasui, Hitomi Tachibana	M,F,M,M,F	PS2	5	Tear Ring	Japan	
Tears to Tiera	2005	Aquaplus	Leaf	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Takayuki Hattori	M	Windows	1	Tears to Tiera	Japan	
Tears to Tiera II: Heir of the Overlord	2013	Aquaplus	Leaf	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Michio Kinugasa, Shinya Ishikawa, Junya Matsuoka, Kazuhide Nakagami, Naoya Shimokawa, Susumu Mameda, Miu	M,M,M,M,M,M,F	Windows	7	Tears to Tiera	Japan	
TechnoMage: Return of Eternity	2000	Sunflowers Interactive	Sunflowers Interactive	Adventure, Action RPG	Fantasy	Alexander Röder	M	Windows, PS1	1		Germany	
Tempest	1998	Softmax Co	Softmax Co	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy			Windows		1	South Korea	
Tenerezza	2003	Aquaplus	Aquaplus	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Junya Matsuoka, Kazuhide Nakagami, Shinya Ishikawa	M,M,M	Windows, Xbox	3		Japan	
Tengai Makyō II: Manjimaru	2003	Hudson Soft Company	Red Company	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Joe Hisatshi, Yasuhiko Fukuda	M,M	PS2, Gamecube	2	Tengai Makyō	Japan	
Tengai Makyō III: Namida	2005	Hudson Soft	Red Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Kazuhiko Kato	M	PS2	1	Tengai Makyō	Japan	
Tengai Makyō III: Namida	2005	Hudson Soft Company	Hudson Soft Company, Red Company	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kazuhiko Kato	M	PS2	1	Tengai Makyō	Japan	
Tengai Makyō Ziria: Haruka naru Jijang	2006	Hudson Soft Company	Hudson Soft Company	RPG	Anime, Fantasy			X360		1	Japan	
Tengai Makyō: Daiyon no Mokushiroku - The Apocalypse IV	1997	Hudson Soft Company	Hudson Soft Company, Red Company	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Toshiyuki Sazagawa	M	Saturn	1	Tengai Makyō	Japan	
Tenshi no Present: Mari Ōkoku Monogatari	2000	Nippon Ichi	Nippon Ichi	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Tempei Sato	M	PS2	1		Japan	
Tenshō Gakuen Genshōroku	2004	Asmik Ace Entertainment Inc.	Shout!Designworks Co. Ltd.	Strategy, Adventure, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Yusuke Beppu, Tomoko Morita	M,F	PS2	2		Japan	
TERA: Fate of Arun (TERA: Rising)	2011	En Masse, Ubisoft, Gameforge, NHN	Bluehole Studio	MMORPG	Fantasy	Kwanghee Park, Red Pang Bang	M,X	Windows	2		South Korea	
Terraria	2011	Re-Logic	Re-Logic	Adventure, Action RPG	Fantasy	Scott Lloyd Shelly	M	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, PS3, PS4, PS Vita, X360, X-Box, Android, iOS, Windows Phone	1	11	USA	
Teudogar	2003	Wolf Mittag Software Development	Wolf Mittag Software Development	RPG	Fantasy	Richard Wagner	M	Windows	1		Germany	
The 3rd Birthday	2010	Square Enix	Square Enix, HexaDrive	Third Person Shooter, RPG	Sci-Fi	Mitsuto Suzuki, Tsuyoshi Sekito, Yoko Shimomura	M,M,F	PSP	3		Japan	
The 4th Coming	1999	Vicom Interactive, Dialsoft	Vicom Interactive, Dialsoft	MMORPG	Fantasy			Windows		1	Canada	
The Ains	1999	Pack-in-Soft	Victor Interactive Software	RPG	Fantasy			PS1		1	Japan	
The Baoning	2011	EA	Hexhead Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Adam Blair	M	Windows, X360, PS3	1		Canada	
The Banner Saga: Factions	2013	Versus Evil	Stoic	RPG	Fantasy	Austin Wintory	M	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, PS4, PS Vita, Android, iOS	1	7	The Banner Saga	USA
The Bard's Tale	2004	Vivendi	ixille Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Chris Espakian, Michael Land, Peter McConnell, Jared Emerson-Johnson, Tommy Tallarico	M,M,M,M,M	5 Windows, PS2, Xbox, OS X		4	USA	
The Battle for Wesnoth	2005	Freeware under the GPL license	David White and Others	Turn Based Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Mathias Westlund, Doug Kaufman, Timothy Pinkham, Tyler Johnson, Ryan Kelly and Others	M,M,M,M,M,X	5 Cross Platform		1	USA	
The Book of Legends	2012	Aldorlea Games	Aldorlea Games	RPG	Anime, Fantasy			Windows		1	USA	
The Bouncer	2001	Square Electronic Arts	Dream Factory	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Noriko Matsuoda, Takahito Eguchi	F,M	PS2	2		Japan	
The Broken Land	2000	ArcMedia	AcePlatinum Family	RPG	Fantasy	Gianluca Verreggia	M	Windows	1		USA	
The Chosen: Well of Souls	2006	Meridian4	Rebelmind	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jaroslav Siwifski	M	Windows	1		Poland	
The Chronicles of Namia: Prince Caspian	2008	Disney Interactive Studios	Fall Line Studios	RPG	Fantasy			Nintendo DS		1	The Chronicles of Namia	USA
The Chronicles of Namia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	2005	Buena Vista Games	Griptonite Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Ian Stocker, Matthew Piersall, Steven Velema	M,M,M	Nintendo DS	3	The Chronicles of Namia	USA	
The Dark Eye: Crypt Raiders	2004	ekware GmbH	Chromaticx GmbH	RPG	Fantasy			I2ME		1	The Dark Eye	Germany
The Dark Eye: Dragon Raid	2004	ekware GmbH	Chromaticx GmbH	RPG	Fantasy			I2ME		1	The Dark Eye	Germany
The Dark Eye: Drakensang	2008	THQ	Radon Labs GmbH	RPG	Fantasy	Tilman Sillescu, Markus Schmidt	M,M	Windows	2		The Dark Eye	Germany
The Dark Eye: Hedime - The Caliph's Daughter	2003	ekware GmbH	Chromaticx GmbH	RPG	Fantasy			I2ME		1	The Dark Eye	Germany
The Dark Eye: Swamp of Doom	2003	ekware GmbH	Chromaticx GmbH	RPG	Fantasy			I2ME		1	The Dark Eye	Germany
The Dark Spire	2009	Arlus	Success Corp.	RPG	Fantasy	Kenichi Araiawa	M	Nintendo DS	1		Japan	
The Desolate Hope	2012	Scottgames	Scottgames	Action RPG	Cyberpunk, Sci-Fi			Windows		1	USA	
The Desolate Room	2007	Scottgames	Scottgames	Action RPG	Cyberpunk, Sci-Fi			Windows		1	USA	
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	2002	Bethesda Softworks	Bethesda Game Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule, Julian Soule	M,M	Windows, Xbox	2	The Elder Scrolls	USA	
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	2006	2K Games, Bethesda	Bethesda Game Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule	M	Windows, X360, PS3	1	The Elder Scrolls	USA	
The Elder Scrolls Travels: Shadowkey	2004	Viz2L, TKO	Viz2L, TKO	RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule	M	N-Gage	1	The Elder Scrolls	USA	
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	2011	Bethesda Softworks	Bethesda Game Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule	M	Windows, X360, PS3		9		USA
The Fall: Last Days of Gaia	2004	Deep Silver	Silver Style Entertainment	Tactical RPG	Post-apocalyptic	Thomas Herrmann, Jochen Gerold, Boris Nonte	M,M,M	3 Windows		1	USA	
The Fifth Disciple	2000	Napoleon Games	Napoleon Games	RPG, Adventure	Fantasy	David Hájek	M	Windows	1		Czech Republic	
The Forest of Doom	2013	Tin Man Games	Tin Man Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy			Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, Android, iOS		5	Australia	

The Forest of Dreams	1999	Tin Man Games	Tin Man Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	Jonathon Page	M		1	Browser-based	1		USA
The Granstream Saga	1997	THQ	Shade Inc.	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Masanori Hiiuchi, Miyako Takasaka, Takako Ochiai	M,F,M		3	PS1	2		Japan
The Guided Fate Paradox	2013	NIS America	Nippon Ichi	RPG	Fantasy	Yōsei Teikoku	X		1	PS3	1		Japan
The Guild 2	2006	Deep Silver, JoWood Productions Software	4HEAD Studios	Simulation, Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Tilman Sillescu, Alexander Röder, Markus Schmidt, Pierre Genwig Langer	M,M,M,M		4	Windows	1	The Guild	Germany
The Hobbit	2003	Sierra Entertainment, Vivendi Universal Games	Saffer Corporation	RPG	Fantasy	Rick Bradshaw, Rod Abernethy, Dave Adams	M,M,M		3	GBA	2	The Hobbit	USA
The Incredible Adventures of Van Helsing	2013	NeocoreGames	NeocoreGames	Action RPG	Horror, Fantasy	Gergely Buttinger	M		1	Windows	1		Hungary
The King of Fighters Kyo	1998	SNK Corporation	Yumekobo Co	Fighting, RPG	Modern	KAZUYO UCHIDA, ZOE, Hidetoshi Ashizawa, Kyoko Naka, BROTHERHIDE, Yasuhiro Naka	M,M,M,M,M,M		6	PS1	1		Japan
The Kingdom of Loathing	2003	Asymmetric Publications	Asymmetric Publications	RPG	Fantasy					Browser-based	1		USA
The Last Remnant	2009	Square Enix	Square Enix	RPG	Fantasy	Tsuyoshi Sekito, Yasuhiro Yamanaka	M,M		2	X360, Windows	2		Japan
The Last Story	2011	Nintendo, Xseed Games	Mistwalker, AQ Interactive	Action RPG	Fantasy	Nobuo Uematsu	M		1	Wii	1		Japan
The Legend of Alon O'ar	2001	Ubisoft	Stormfront Studios	RPG	Fantasy	Andrew Boyd, Robb Mills, Paul Gorman, Duff Studios	M,M,M,M		4	PS2	1		USA
The Legend of Aves	2007	Mgame	Nergame	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		1	Windows	1		South Korea
The Legend of Dragon	1999	SCE	SCE	RPG	Fantasy	Dennis Martin, Takeo Miratsu	M,M		2	PS1, PSP, PS3	3		Japan
The Legend of Heroes II: Prophecy of the Moonlight Witch	2006	Namco Bandai Games	NICROVISION Inc., Nihon Falcom	RPG	Fantasy	SoundTeam jk	X		1	PSP	1	The Legend of Heroes	Japan
The Legend of Heroes III: Song of the Ocean	2007	Namco Bandai Games	MICROVISION, Nihon Falcom	RPG	Fantasy	Mitsuo Ishikawa, Atsushi Shirakawa, Takahiro Yonahama, Naoki Kaneda, Masaru Nakajima, Hirofumi Matsuoka	F,M,M,M,M,M		6	PSP	1	The Legend of Heroes	Japan
The Legend of Heroes IV: A Tear of Vermillion	2009	Bandai	Micro Vision	RPG	Fantasy	SoundTeam jk	X		1	PSP	1	The Legend of Heroes	Japan
The Legend of Heroes: Trails in the Sky	2004	Nihon Falcom, Xseed Games	Nihon Falcom	RPG	Fantasy	Hayato Sonoda, Wataru Ishibashi, Takahide Murayama	M,M,M		3	Windows, PS3	2	The Legend of Heroes	Japan
The Legend of Mir 2	2001	Digital Bros, Shanda, Gamegot, Softworld	WeMade Entertainment, ActozSoft	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		1	Windows	1	The Legend of Mir	South Korea
The Legend of Mir 3	2004	WEMADE ENTERTAINMENT, SHANDA, SOFTWORLD, EYE ENTERTAINMENT, Optic Communication, QIGO	WeMade Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X		1	Windows	1	The Legend of Mir	South Korea
The Lord of the Rings Online	2007	Midway Games	Turbine	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy	Stephen Dignergio, Chance Thomas, Geoff Scott, Brad Spears, Egan Budd	M,M,M,M,M		5	Windows	1	Lord of the Rings	USA
The Lord of the Rings: Tactics	2005	EA	Amaze Entertainment	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Drew Cady, Barry Dowsett, Kevin Tone, Kesler Creative	M,M,M,X		4	PSP	1	Lord of the Rings	USA
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring	2002	Black Label Games	WXP, Inc.	Action RPG	Fantasy	Brad Spear	M		1	Windows, Xbox, PS2	3	The Lord of the Rings	USA
The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	2003	EA	EA	Action RPG	Fantasy	Sound Mountain, Howard Shore	X,M		2	Windows, Mac OS X, PS2, Xbox, Gamecube	5	The Lord of the Rings	USA
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	2004	EA	EA	RPG	Fantasy	David Fels, Geoff Gamett, Andrew Luckey, Steve Limonoff, Jerry Merrill, Charlie Stockley, Chaz Wilson	M,M,M,M,M,M,M		7	Xbox, PS2, Gamecube	3	Lord of the Rings	USA
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	2002	EA	Griptonite Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Ian Stocker	M		1	GBA	1	The Lord of the Rings	USA
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	2002	EA	EA, Stormfront Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Robb Mills	M		1	Windows, Xbox, PS2	3	The Lord of the Rings	USA
The Lord of the Rings: War in the North	2011	Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment	Snowblind Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Nathan Grigg	M		1	Windows, Mac OS X, X360, PS3	4	The Lord of the Rings	USA
The Lord of the Rings: War of the Ring	2003	Sierra Entertainment	Liquid Entertainment	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Lennie Moore, Chance Thomas, Brad Spear	M,M,M		3	Windows	1	The Lord of the Rings	USA
The Magic Land (A-Sock-Ellipse Now!)	2003	Astral Entertainment	Astral Entertainment	Tactical RPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		USA
The Matrix Online	2005	Seps, Warner Bros Interactive Entertainment	Monolith	MMORPG	Cyberpunk, Sci-Fi	Don Davis	M		1	Windows	1	The Matrix	USA
The Mighty Quest for Epic Loot	2013	Ubisoft	Ubisoft Divertissements	Strategy, Action RPG	Fantasy	Jamie Christopherson	M		1	Windows	1		Canada
The Necrons	1997	KOGA Publishing	Mirinae Software	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy					DOS	1		South Korea
The Nightmare of Dracula: Fushiguo dungeon	2004	Namco Hometek Inc.	Arika Co. Ltd., Chunsoft Co. Ltd.	RPG	Fantasy	Masashi Yano, Ayako Saso, Shinji Hozoe, Takayuki Aihara	M,F,M,M		4	PS2	2		Japan
The Original Mulan	1998	Global Business Concept	Pioneer Soft	Action RPG	Fantasy					DOS	1		China
The Precursors	2010	Russobit-M	Deep Shadows	Racing, Action, RPG	Sci-Fi	Mikhail Kotov, Maxim Efimov	M,M		2	Windows	1		Ukraine
The Quest	2006	Redshift	Redshift	RPG	Fantasy					Windows, Windows Mobile, iOS, Palm OS, Pocket PC, Symbian	6		Hungary
The Realm	1997	Sierra On-Line	Sierra On-Line	MMORPG	Fantasy	Dan Kehler	M		1	Windows	1		USA
The Roots: Gates of Chaos	2005	Cemega, Nokia	Tannhauser Gate	RPG	Fantasy					N-Gage	1	The Roots	Poland
The Saga of Ryoum (Ryōm)	2004	Winch Gate	Nevrax	MMORPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Björn Ane Lagim, Frédéric Motte, Arnaud Lalanne	M,M,M		3	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		France
The Secret World	2012	EA	Funcom Oslo A/S	MMORPG	Modern	Marc Carham, Simon Poole, Magnus Bette	M,M,M		3	Windows	2		Norway
The Sims 2	2005	EA, Maxis Software	Amaze Entertainment	RPG, Simulation	Modern	Ian Stocker, Kyle Johnson	M,M		2	GBA	1	The Sims	USA
The Sims 2	2005	EA	Amaze Entertainment	RPG, Simulation	Modern	Ian Stocker	M		1	GBA	1	The Sims	USA
The Spiderwick Chronicles	2008	Sierra Entertainment	Backbone Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Robert Thomire	M		1	Nintendo DS	1	The Spiderwick Chronicles	USA
The Spirit Engine	2003	Natomic Studios	Natomic Studios	RPG	Fantasy	Josh Whelchel	M		1	Windows	2		USA
The Temple of Elemental Evil: A Classic Greyhaw Adventure	2003	Atari	Troika Games	RPG	Fantasy	Ron Fish	M		1	Windows	1	D&D	USA
The Temple of Evil	2003	Atari	Troika	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Ron Fish	M		1	Windows	1	D&D	USA
The Tone Rebellion	1997	Virgin Interactive Entertainment	Logic Factory	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Nenad Vugrinec	M		1	Windows	1		USA
The Twin Heroes 2 (Xin Jueai Shuangliao 2)	2000	Unistar	Unistar	RPG	Fantasy	Ko Masaru (馬場 子馬)	M		1	Windows	2	Xin Jueai Shuangliao	China
The Wanderer	2000	X Media Publishing	X Media Publishing	Action RPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		USA
The War of Genesis III: Part 2	2000	Softmax Co.	Softmax Co.	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Sung-Woon Jang	M		1	Windows	1		South Korea
The Warrior's Tale	2006	Battle Phase Games	Battle Phase Games	RPG	Fantasy					Windows	1		USA
The Witcher	2007	Atari	CD Projekt RED	Action RPG, Hack and Slash	Fantasy	Adam Skonrpa, Paweł Błaszcak	M,M		2	Windows, X360	2	The Witcher	Poland
The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings	2011	Atari	CD Projekt RED	Action RPG	Fantasy	Adam Skonrpa, Krzysztof Wierzyński, Marcin Prozybyłowicz	M,M,M		3	Windows, X360	2	The Witcher	Poland
The Witcher: VS	2008	CD Projekt RED	one2tribe	RPG	Fantasy	Adam Skonrpa	M		1	Browser-based	1	The Witcher	Poland
The World Ends With You	2007	Square Enix	Jupiter	Action RPG	Modern, Fantasy	Takeharu Ishimoto	M		1	Nintendo DS	1		Japan
The World Ends with You: Solo Remix	2012	Square Enix	Square Enix, Jupiter Corp.	Action RPG	Anime, Modern, Fantasy	Takeharu Ishimoto	M		1	Android, iOS	2		Japan
There	2003	There Inc	There Inc	MMORPG, Simulation	Modern					Windows	1		USA
Thousand Arms	1998	Atlus	Red Company, TOSE	RPG	Fantasy, Steampunk	Atlus Sound Team, Kazuhito Kiluchi, Daisuke Miyachi	X,M,M		3	PS1	1		Japan
Thousand Arms	1999	Atlus	Red Company	RPG	Fantasy	Atlus Sound Team	X			PS1	1		Japan
Threads of Fate	1999	Square	Square	RPG	Fantasy	Junya Nakano	M		1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4		Japan
Throne of Darkness	2001	Sierra On-Line	CLICK Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Elienne Grunenwald, Mark Hardy	M,M		2	Windows	1		USA
Tibia	1997	CP Productions	CP Productions	MMORPG	Fantasy					Windows, Linux, Browser-based	2		Germany
TibiaME	2003	CipSoft GmbH	CipSoft GmbH	MMORPG	Anime, Fantasy					iOS, Android, Browser-based, J2ME, Symbian	5		Germany

Till Death Do Us Part	2013	Choice of Games	Choice of Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	NO MUSIC			Android, iOS	2		USA
Time Stalkers	1999	SEGA	Climax Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Kondo, Yasutaka Hatada, Norihiro Nomura	M,M,M	3	Dreamcast	1		Japan
Time Stalkers	2000	Sega	Climax	RPG, Monster Raising	Fantasy	Masayoshi Ishi	M	1	Dreamcast	1	Spin-off of Landstalker: The Treasures of King Nole	Japan
Tir-nan-og III	2002	SystemSoft	SystemSoft	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Nii Masao, Maki Shibata, Hinomaru Factory	M,F,X	3	Windows	1	Tir-nan-og	Japan
Tir-nan-og IV: King of the Valiant	2003	SystemSoft	SystemSoft	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Nii Masao, Maki Shibata, Hinomaru Factory	M,F,X	3	Windows	1	Tir-nan-og	Japan
Tir-nan-og V: Eternal Hitsugi	2005	SystemSoft Alpha	SystemSoft Alpha	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Nii Masao, Maki Shibata, Hinomaru Factory	M,F,X	3	Windows	1	Tir-nan-og	Japan
Titan Quest	2006	THQ	Iron Lore Entertainment, Demiurge Studios	Action RPG, Hack and Slash	Fantasy	Scott Morton, Michael Verrette	M,M	2	Windows	1		USA
To Heart 2: Dungeon Travelers	2011	Aquaplus	Sting	RPG	Fantasy	Michio Kinugasa	M	1	PSP, PS Vita	2	Dungeon Travelers	Japan
To the City of the Clouds	2013	Choice of Games	Choice of Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	NO MUSIC			Android, Browser-based, Kindle Classic, iOS	4		USA
Tobal 2	1997	Square	Dream Factory	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Takayuki Nakamura	M	1	PS1	2	Tobal	Japan
Tokyo Majin Gakuen Gehôchô: Keppûroku	2004	Marvelous Interactive Inc.	Shout! Designworks Co.	Strategy, Adventure, RPG	Anime, Fantasy				PS2	1	Tokyo Majin Gakuen	Japan
Tomato Adventure	2000	Nintendo	AlphaDream	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Akira Takemoto	M	1	GBA, Wii U Virtual Console	2		Japan
Toon Human	2008	Microsoft Game Studios	Silicon Knights	Action RPG	Fantasy, Sci-Fi	Steve Heflin	M	1	X360	1		Canada
Toontown Online	2003	Disney Interactive	Disney Interactive, Schell Games, Frogchildren Studios	MMORPG	Fantasy	Jamie Christopherson, Cody Westheimer	M,M	2	Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Torchlight	2009	Perfect World Entertainment	Runic Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Matt Ueliem	M	1	Windows	1	Torchlight	USA
Torchlight II	2012	Runic Games	Runic Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Matt Ueliem	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Toxic Mayhem: The Troma Project	2002	Troma Entertainment	Nekrosou, ZUXO2 Entertainment AG	Action RPG	Horror, Post Apocalyptic, Sci-Fi	Nevermore, The Ukrainian Assassins, The Loose Nutz, Topware Computer Games	X,X,X,X	4	Windows	1		Germany
Trade & Battle: Card Hero	2000	Nintendo	Intelligent Systems	Card-based RPG	Fantasy	Takane Okubo	F	1	GBC, 3DS	2		Japan
TradeWars: Rising	2009	Syllen Games	Syllen Games	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Blind Saton	X	1	Browser-based Windows, Palm OS, Windows Mobile	1		Canada
Tradewinds	2003	WildTangent	Sandlot Games	Naval, Fantasy	Naval, Fantasy	Daniel Bernstein				3	Tradewinds	USA
Tradewinds 2	2005	Shockwave	Sandlot Games	Strategy, RPG	Historical, Naval	Daniel Bernstein	M	1	Windows, Windows Mobile, Android, iOS, J2ME, Palm OS, webOS	7	Tradewinds	USA
Trapped 2	1997	New Generation Software	Oxyon	Action RPG	Fantasy				Amiga	1	Trapped	Germany
Treasure Seekers of Lady Luck	2013	Choice of Games	Choice of Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Sci-Fi	NO MUSIC			Android, Browser-based, Kindle Classic, iOS, Mac OS X	5		USA
Tricolore Crisis	2000	Victor	Victor	RPG	Fantasy				Dreamcast	1		Japan
Trinity: Souls of Zill O'll	2010	Tecmo Koei	Omega Force	RPG	Fantasy	Yoshihiro Ike	M	1	PS3	1		Japan
TRON 2.0	2003	Buena Vista Interactive	Monolith Productions	Action RPG	Cyberpunk, Sci-Fi	Nathan Grigg	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Xbox	3	TRON	USA
Tsugunai: Attonement	2001	Atlus	Cattle Cal	RPG	Fantasy	Yasunori Mitsuda	M	1	PS2	1		Japan
Tun Town	1998	Softstar	DOMO Production	RPG	Fantasy	Hsin-Jui Wu, Nai-Ti Tu	M,M	2	DOS	1		China
Tun Town 2	2005	Softstar Entertainment	Softstar Entertainment	RPG	Modern, Sci-Fi, Fantasy				Windows	1	Tun Town	China
Tunnel Tail	2012	BEST Foundation	Schell Games	RPG	Fantasy				Android, iOS	2		USA
Twelve Sky	2007	Alt1, Aeria Games	Alt1	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1	Twelve Sky	South Korea
Twelve Sky 2	2008	Mayn Interactive, Gametec, Karan, Ohyo, Gametec, Aeria Games	ALT1	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1	Twelve Sky	South Korea
Twelve: Sengoku Fushinden	2005	Konami	Konami	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Sumitaka Sekiguchi, HAL, Yuko Asai	F,X,F	3	PSP	1		Japan
Twinline RPG	1998	Konami	KCE Tokyo	Action RPG	Fantasy, Anime	Hiroshi Tamawari	M	1	PS1	1	Twinline	Japan
Two Brothers	2013	Akkk Studios	Akkk Studios	Action RPG	Fantasy	Andrew Allanson	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Two Worlds	2007	SouthPeak	Reality Pump	Action RPG	Fantasy	Harold Faltermeyer	M	1	Windows, X360	2	Two Worlds	Poland
Two Worlds II	2010	Topware Interactive	Reality Pump	Action RPG	Fantasy	Glorian Music Marks	X	1	Windows, X360, PS3	3		Germany
UFO: Afterlight	2007	TopWare Interactive	ALTAR Games	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Tomáš Brejlek	M	1	Windows	1	UFO	Czech Republic
UFO: Afterblack	2005	Tri Synergy	ALTAR Interactive	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Tomáš Brejlek, Filip Džádal	M,M	2	Windows	1	UFO	Czech Republic
Ultima IX: Ascension	1999	EA	ORIGIN Systems	Action RPG	Fantasy	George Oldzey	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Ultima Online	1997	EA	ORIGIN Systems	MMORPG	Fantasy	Kirk Winterrowd, Joe Basquez, Hal Milton	M,M,M	3	Windows	1	Ultima	USA
Uncharted Waters Online	2005	Koei, Koei Tecmo, OG Planet	Koei, Koei Tecmo	Historical, Maritime	Historical, Maritime	Taku Iwasaki, Kazunori Miyake	M,M	2	Windows, PS3, PS4	3	Uncharted Waters	Japan
Underlight	1998	Lyra Studios, Ixos Studios, Red Coat Games, KoiWare	Lyra Studios, Ixos Studios, Red Coat Games, KoiWare	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		USA
Unepic	2011	Francisco Téllez de Meneses	Francisco Téllez de Meneses	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jose Jaime Hidalgo de la Torre	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Wii U	3		Spain
Unleashed Saga	2002	Square, Square Enix, Atari	Square	RPG	Fantasy	Masashi Hamauzu	M	1	PS2	1	Saga	Japan
Unnatural	2013	Hosted Games	Sam Kabell	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Horror	NO MUSIC			Android, Browser-based, iOS	3		UK
Untold Legends: Brotherhood of the Blade	2005	Sony Online Entertainment	Sony Online Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Chad Mossholder	M	1	PSP	1	Untold Legends	USA
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	2006	Sony Online Entertainment	Sony Online Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Laura Kargman	F	1	PS3	1	Untold Legends	USA
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	2006	Sony Online Entertainment	Sony Online Entertainment	Action RPG	Fantasy	Laura Kargman	F	1	PSP	1	Untold Legends	USA
Uplink: Hacker Elite	2001	Strategy First, Inc.	Introversion Software Limited	RPG, Simulation	Cyberpunk, Sci-Fi	Karsten Koch, Dual Crew, Ryan Cramer, Timelord, Peter Hajba	M,X,M,7,M	5	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, iOS, Android	5		UK
Urban Legend	2007	Electronic Entertainment Studio	Electronic Entertainment Studio	Tactical RPG	Sci-Fi				Windows	1		Russia
US Special Forces: Team Factor	2002	Xicat Interactive	TFX s.r.o.	Strategy, Action RPG	Modern, War	Krzysztof Peterka, Keith Hawley	M,M	2	Windows	1		Czech Republic
Uzavaruromo	2002	Aquaplus	Leaf, Sting	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Junya Matsuoka, Takahiro Yonemura, Shinya Ishikawa	M,M,M	3	Windows, PS2	2		Japan
Vagrant Story	2000	Square	Square	RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Sakamoto	M	1	PS1	1		Japan
Valdis Story: Abyssal City	2013	Endlessruff Games	Endlessruff Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Zack Pennih	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Valhalla Chronicles	2003	Big City	Paradox, Oblivion	Action RPG	Fantasy	Jorgen Josefsson	M	1	Windows	1		Sweden
Valhalla Knights	2006	Marvelous Entertainment, Xseed Games, Rising Star Games	Marvelous Inc., K2 LLC	RPG	Fantasy				PSP	1	Valhalla Knights	Japan
Valhalla Knights 2: Battle Stance	2008	Marvelous Entertainment, Xseed Games, Rising Star Games	K2 LLC	RPG	Fantasy	Shojiro Nakazaka	M	1	PSP	1	Valhalla Knights	Japan
Valhalla Knights 3	2013	Marvelous AQL, XSEED Games	K2 LLC	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	PS Vita	1	Valhalla Knights	Japan
Valhalla Knights: Eldar Saga	2005	Marvelous Entertainment, Xseed Games, Rising Star Games	K2 LLC	Action RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	Wii	1	Valhalla Knights	Japan
Valkyria Chronicles	2008	Sega	Sega	Strategy, Action RPG	Anime, Historical	Hitoshi Sakimoto	M	1	Windows, PS3	2	Valkyria Chronicles	Japan

Valkyria Chronicles	2008	Sega	Sega	Tactical RPG	Historical, Fantasy	Hiroshi Sakamoto	M	1	PS3, Windows	2	Valkyria Chronicles	Japan
Valkyrie Profile	1999	Enix	tri-Ace	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	PS1	1		Japan
Valkyrie Profile 2: Silmeria	2006	Square Enix	tri-Ace	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	PS2	1	Valkyrie Profile	Japan
Valkyrie Profile: Covenant of the Plume	2008	Square Enix	tri-Ace	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Yoshinori Aoki, Mana Tanahashi, Hiroshi Okamoto	M,F,M	3	Nintendo DS	1	Valkyrie Profile	Japan
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	2006	Square Enix	tri-Ace	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	PSP	1	Valkyrie Profile	Japan
Valkyrie Profile: Tega wo Setai Mono	2008	Square Enix	tri-Ace	RPG	Fantasy	Motoi Sakuraba	M	1	Nintendo DS	1	Valkyrie Profile	Japan
Vampire: The Masquerade - Bloodlines	2004	Activision	Troika	FPS, Action RPG	Modern, Fantasy	Rik Schaffer	M	1	Windows	1	Vampire: The Masquerade	USA
Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption	2000	Activision	Nihilistic Software	Action RPG	Horror, Fantasy	Kevin Manthei, Chris Collins, Greg Forsberg, Rob Ross	M,M,M,M	4	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Vampire: The Masquerade	USA
Vangoromania	2002	Organizações Globo SA, Pti Editora Ltda.	Green Land Studios	Action RPG	Modern, Fantasy				Windows	1		Brazil
Vandal Hearts: Flames of Judgement	2010	Konami	Hijinx Studios	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Hijinx Audio	X	1	X360, PS3	2	Vandal Hearts	USA
Vandal Hearts II	1999	Konami	Konami	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Hiroshi Tamawari	M	1	PS1	1	Vandal Hearts	Japan
Vanguard Bandits	1998	Human Entertainment	Human Entertainment	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Kouji Nikura, Chiyoumaru Shikura, Masafumi Takada	M,M,M	3	PS1	1		Japan
Vanguard: Saga of Heroes	2005	Sony Online Entertainment	Sigl Games Online, Sony Online Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy	Todd Masten	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Vantage Master	1993	Nihon Falcom	Nihon Falcom	Tactical RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		Japan
Vantage Master: Mystic Far East	2000	Nihon Falcom	Nihon Falcom	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Kaname Ohara	M	1	Windows	1		Japan
Veldneshiba Senki: Tsubasa no Kunshô	1997	SCE	TENNY Co	Action RPG	Flight sim, RPG	Kazuhiko Toyama, Takashi Tsumaki, Takafumi Fujisawa	M,M,M	3	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4		Japan
Vendetta Online	2004	Strategy First, Guild Software	Guild Software	Simulation, MMORPG	Sci-Fi	Philippe Charon, Jeremy Schmitz, John Bergman	M,M,M	3	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, Android, iOS	5		USA
Venetica	2011	Atari	Deck13 Interactive	RPG	Fantasy	Jan Klose	M	1	Windows, X360, PS3	3		Germany
Venus & Braves: Majo no Megami to Horobi no Yogen	2003	Namco	Namco	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Maasako Ongami, Kenji Kobayashi, Tomoko Tatsuta, Junichi Nakatsuru	F,M,F,M	4	PS2	1		Japan
Venus & Braves: Majo to Megami to Horobi no Yogen	2003	Namco	Namco	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Mitsuko Vogami, Kenji Kobayashi, Yoshinori Kawamoto, Hiroshi Uchida, Kenji Kobayashi, Junichi Nakatsuru	F,F,M,M,M,M	6	PS2, PSP	2		Japan
Vikings of Thule	2010	Gnagig	Gnagig	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy				Browser-based	1		Iceland
Villagers and Heroes	2011	Mad Otter Games	Neonga AG	MMORPG	Comedy, Fantasy				Browser-based	1		Germany
Vindictus (Mabinogi Heroes)	2010	Nexon, TianCity	devCAT	Action, MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Mabinogi	South Korea
V-Master Cross	2002	Success Corp.	Birthday	Card-based RPG	Fantasy				GBA	1		Japan
Volfow	2003	Namco	Namco	Tactical RPG	Fantasy, Surreal				PS1	1		Japan
Voyage Century Online	2006	IGG, Snail Games	Snail Games	MMORPG	Historical, Maritime				Windows	1		China
Wachenröder	1998	SEGA	TNS Co	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Jan McDonnell, Takayuki Negishi, Kenjiro Sakuma, Satoshi Miyahara, Masayoshi Ishi	M,M,M,M,M	5	Saturn	1		Japan
Waku	2012	Ankama Games, Square Enix	Ankama Games	MMORPG	Fantasy	Gaigui	X	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	9	Waku	France
Waku Waku Puyo Puyo Dungeon	1998	Compile	Compile	RPG	Fantasy	Ko Hayashi, Kenta Haga, Osamu Ishikawa, Daisuke Nagata, Shigharuru Imano	M,M,M,M,M	5	Saturn	1		Japan
Walburga's Night	1999	SXC Soft Land, Wizard Soft	Dragonfly Co.	RPG	Fantasy	Masumi Ito	F	1	Windows	1		South Korea
War Along the Mohawk	1998	Empire Interactive	Edward Grabowski Communications	RTS, RPG, Strategy	Historical				Windows	1		UK
War of Genesis Side Story I: Rhapody of Zephyr	1998	Softmax Co	Softmax Co	Tactical RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		South Korea
War of the Immortals	2011	Arc Games	Perfect World Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos	2002	Bizzard Entertainment Inc.	Bizzard Entertainment Inc.	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Tracy W. Bush, Derek Duke, Jason Hayes, Glenn Stafford	M,M,M,M	4	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Warcraft	USA
Warframe	2013	Digital Extremes	Digital Extremes	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Keith Power, George Spanos	M,M	2	Windows, PS4, X-One	3		Canada
Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War II	2009	THQ	Relic Entertainment	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Doyle W. Donehoo	M	1	Windows	1	Warhammer	Canada
Warhammer Online: Age of Reckoning	2008	EA	Mythic Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy	Brad Derrick	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Warhammer	USA
Warhammer: Dark Omen	1998	EA	Mindcape International	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Mark Knight	M	1	PS1, Windows	2	Warhammer	UK
Warhammer: Mark of Chaos	2006	Namco Bandai Games	Black Hole Entertainment	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Jeremy Soule	M	1	Windows	1	Warhammer	Hungary
Warlords IV: Heroes of Etheria	2003	Ubisoft	Infinite Interactive	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Steve Fawcner	M	1	Windows	1	Warlords: Battlery	Australia
Warlords: Battlery	2000	Strategic Simulations	SSG Strategic Studies Group	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Steve Fawcner	M	1	Windows	1	Warlords: Battlery	USA
Warlords: Battlery II	2002	Ubisoft	SSG Strategic Studies Group	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Steve Fawcner	M	1	Windows	1	Warlords: Battlery	Australia
Warlords: Battlery III	2004	Enlight Interactive Inc.	Infinite Interactive	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Steve Fawcner	M	1	Windows	1	Warlords: Battlery	Australia
Warrior Dragon	2000	Lumental Games	Lumental Games	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		Canada
Warrior Epic	2009	UTV True Games	Possibility Space	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Warriors of Might and Magic	2000	3DO Company	3DO Co.mpany	Action RPG	Fantasy	Tom Chase, John Baker, Barry Blum, Brian Min	M,M,M,M	4	PS1, PS2	2	Warriors of Might and Magic	USA
Warriors of the Lost Empire	2007	Tommo Inc.	UFO	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yuuto Koshino	M	1	PSP	1		USA
Warriors Orochi	2007	KOEI Corporation	KOEI Co., Omega Force	Action RPG	Fantasy	Masato Koike, Kensuke Inage	M,M	2	Windows, PS2, PS3, X360, PSP	5	Warriors Orochi	Japan
Wars and Warriors: Joan of Arc	2004	Enlight	Enlight	Action RPG	Historical, Fantasy	Jason Graves	M	1	Windows	1		USA
War Home: The Legendary Fairy Bottle	2012	Raitokomniak Games	Raitokomniak Games	Action RPG	Fantasy	Aaron Knogh	M	1	Windows	1		Finland
Way Walkers: University	2012	Hosted Games	J. Leigh	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	NO MUSIC			Android, Browser-based, Kindle Classic, iOS	4		USA
Wayward	2013	Unlok	Unlok	RPG	Fantasy	Austin Drillon	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, Browser-based	4		Canada
Wazhack	2012	Waz	Waz	RPG	Fantasy	Aeronic, Warwick Allison	X,M	2	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, Android, Browser-based, iOS	6		Australia
World Wars: The Unknown Episode of World War II	2004	Strategy First	Mirage	RPG	Historical, Fantasy				Windows	1		USA
Wotvav Estrea	1999	Hudson Soft Company	Hudson Soft Company	RPG	Fantasy	Kazuhiko Sawaguchi	M	1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4		Japan
White Knight Chronicles	2008	Sony Computer Entertainment	Level-5, SCE Japan Studio	RPG	Fantasy	Takeshi Inoue, Yumiko Hashizume, Noriyasu Agematsu	M,F,M	3	PS3	1	White Knight Chronicles	Japan
White knight Chronicles II	2011	Sony Computer Entertainment	Level-5, SCE Japan Studio	RPG	Fantasy	Yumiko Hashizume	F	1	PS3	1	White Knight Chronicles	Japan
White Knight Chronicles Origins	2011	Sony Computer Entertainment	SCE Japan Studio, Matrix Software	RPG	Fantasy	Noriyasu Agematsu, Takeshi Inoue, Yumiko Hashizume	M,M,F	3	PSP	1	White Knight Chronicles	Japan
Wild Arms 2	1999	SCE	Media Vision Entertainment	RPG	Steampunk, Fantasy	Michiko Naruke	F	1	PS1, PSP, PS3	3	Wild Arms	Japan
Wild Arms 3	2002	Sony Computer Entertainment	Media Vision	RPG	Steampunk	Michiko Naruke	F	1	PS2	1	Wild Arms	Japan
Wild ARMs 4	2005	SCEI, XSEED, 505	Media Vision	RPG	Steampunk	Michiko Naruke, Masato Kouda, Nobuyuki Shimizu, Ryuta Suzuki	F,M,M,M	4	PS2	1	Wild Arms	Japan
Wild ARMs 5	2006	SCEI, XSEED, 505	Media Vision	RPG	Steampunk	Masato Kouda, Noriyasu Agematsu	M,M	2	PS2	1	Wild Arms	Japan
Wild Arms Alter Code: F	2003	Agnetec	Media Vision Entertainment	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Michiko Naruke	F	1	PS2	1	Wild Arms	Japan

Wild Arms X?	2008	XSEED Games	Media Vision Entertainment	RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Maasato Kouda, Noriyasu Agetamusu, Junpei Fujita, Hitoshi Fujima, Daisuke Kikuta	M,F,M,M,M	5	PSP	3	Wild Arms	Japan
Wild Card	2003	Square Co.	Square Co.	Card-based RPG	Fantasy				Wonderwan Color	1	Wild Card	Japan
Will Fight for Food	2012	Pyrodactyl Games	Pyrodactyl Games	Action RPG	Modern, Fighting	Aaron Kearns	M	1	Windows, Linux	2		India
Wind Fantasy 2 (Fengse Huanxiang 2)	2000	Unistar	FunYours Technology	RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows	1	Wind Fantasy	China
Wind Fantasy 3 (Fengse Huanxiang 3: Zui yu Fa de Zhenhuan)	2004	Unistar	FunYours Technology	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows	1	Wind Fantasy	China
Wind Fantasy 4: The END of Destiny (Fengse Huanxiang 4: Shengzhan de Zhongyue)	2009	Unistar	FunYours Technology	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows	1	Wind Fantasy	China
Windchaser	2008	4ip entertainment	Chimera Entertainment GmbH	Strategy, RPG	Fantasy	Alexander Röder, Alex Pfeffer, Markus Schmidt	M,M,M	3	Windows	1		Germany
Winter Voices: Avalanche	2010	BeyondthePillars SAS	BeyondthePillars SAS	RPG	Fantasy	Balthazar Benadon	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X	2		France
With Your Destiny	2003	HanbitSoft	JoyImpact	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Wizard101	2008	Kingisle Entertainment, Gameforge	Kingisle Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy, Kids	Nelson Everhart, Nick Jonas	M,M	2	Windows, Mac OS X	2		USA
Wizardry 8	2003	Sir-Tech	Sir-Tech	RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Kevin Marshall	M	1	Windows	1	Wizardry	USA
Wizardry Online	2013	Sony Online Entertainment	Gamepot, Headlock Corporation	MMORPG, Action	Fantasy	Procyon Studios, Kang Ho, Shunsuke Yuzehiya, Maki Kinaka, Naoki Kameoka, Akimasa Shibata	X,M,M,F,F,M	6	Windows	1		Japan
Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land	2003	Altus, Ubisoft	Racjin	RPG	Fantasy	Makoto Suehiro	M	1	PS2	1	Wizardry	Japan
Wizards & Warriors	2000	Activision	Heuristic Park	RPG	Fantasy	Steve Miller	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Wizard's Choice Volume 1	2011	Delight Games	Delight Games	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Fantasy	NO MUSIC			Acadroid, Kindle, iOS, Windows Phone	4	Choice of	USA
Wolfenstein RPG	2009	EA Mobile	id Software	RPG	Alternate Reality, Historical, War	Matthew C. Ross, Bill Brown, Christian Antkow	M,M,M	3	Blackberry, BREW, J2ME, iOS	4	Wolfenstein	USA
WonderKing Online	2006	Toi Game, Gameheart	Toi Win Games	MMORPG	Fantasy	Developed Internally	X	1	Windows	1		South Korea
Wonderland Online	2008	Internet Gaming Gate	Chinese Gamer International	MMORPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Words Worth	1999	EFF Co.	EFF Co.	Action RPG	Fantasy		M,M	2	Windows	1		Japan
World of Dragon Warrior: Torneko - The Last Hope	1999	Enix	Chunsoft	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		Taiwan
World of Warcraft	2004	Bizzard Entertainment	Bizzard Entertainment	MMORPG	Fantasy	Jason Hayes, Tracy W. Bush, Derek Duke, Glenn Stafford	M,M,M,M	4	Windows, Mac OS X	2	Warcraft	USA
WorldShift	2008	Got Game Entertainment	Black Sea Studios	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi	Borislav Slavov, Victor Stoyanov	M,M	2	Windows	1		Bulgaria
Wujin de Suning: Shouhuzhe zhi Jian Waidhuan	1999	Technical Group	Winking Wind/Thunder	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		
Wulin Qunxia Zhuan	2003	Soft-World	Oriental Algorithm System	RPG	Historical, Martial Arts				Windows	1		China
Wurm Online	2006	Code Club AB	Onetofree AB, Code Club AB	MMORPG	Fantasy	Tom E Morrison	M	1	Windows	1		Sweden
Xanadu Next	2005	Nihon Falcom	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Takahide Murayama, Takahiro Uetsuga	M,M	2	Windows	1	Xanadu	Japan
Xenoblade Chronicles	2010	Nintendo	Monolith Soft	Action RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Yoko Shimoguta, Akira Tetsuya Kudo, CHICO, Kenji Yamamoto, Masahiro Miyoshi, Yasunori Mitsuda	F,M,F,M,F,M	6	Wii, Wii U	2	Xenoblade	Japan
Xenogears	1998	Square	Square	RPG	Sci-Fi	Yasunori Mitsuda	M	1	PS1, PSP, PS3, PS Vita	4	Xenogears	Japan
Xenosaga Episode I: Der Wille zur Macht	2002	Namco	Monolith	RPG	Sci-Fi	Yasunori Mitsuda	M	1	PS2	1	Xenosaga	Japan
Xenosaga Episode II: Also sprach Zarathustra	2006	Namco Bandai	Monolith	RPG	Sci-Fi, Fantasy	Yuki Kajura	F	1	PS2	1	Xenosaga	Japan
Xenosaga Episode III: Jenseits von Gut und Böse	2004	Namco, Sony Computer Entertainment	Monolith	RPG	Sci-Fi	Yuki Kajura, Shinji Hosoe	F,M	2	PS2	1	Xenosaga	Japan
Xenosaga: Episode I - Der Wille zur Macht	2002	Namco Hometek Inc.	Monolith Software Inc.	RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Yasunori Mitsuda	M	1	PS2	1	Xenosaga	Japan
Xenosaga: Episode II - Jenseits von Gut und Böse	2004	Namco Hometek Inc.	Monolith Software	RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Yuki Kajura, Shinji Hosoe	F,M	2	PS2	1	Xenosaga	Japan
Xenosaga: Episode III - Also Sprach Zarathustra	2006	Namco Bandai Games	Monolith Software	RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Keiichi Nozaki, Yasunori Mori	M,M	2	PS2	1	Xenosaga	Japan
Xenus II: White Gold	2010	Russobit-M	Deep Shadows	Action RPG	Modern, Crime	Mikhail Kotov	M	1	Windows	1	Xenus	Ukraine
Xianjian Qixia Zhuan 2	2003	Softstar Entertainment	Softstar Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Xianjian Qixia Zhuan	China
Xianjian Qixia Zhuan 3	2003	Softstar Entertainment	Softstar Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Zhihao Zeng, Shinkay Woo, Ji-Yi Luo, Zhi-Hua Zhou	M,M,M,M	4	Windows	1	Xianjian Qixia Zhuan	China
Xianjian Qixia Zhuan 3 Waizhuan: Wen Qing Pian	2004	Unistar	Softstar Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Zhihao Zeng, Shinkay Woo, Ji-Yi Luo, Zhi-Hua Zhou	M,M,M,M	4	Windows	1	Xianjian Qixia Zhuan	China
Xianjian Qixia Zhuan 4	2007	Softstar Entertainment, Unistar	Softstar Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	Jiyi Luo, Zhi-Hua Zhou, Shinkay Woo, Zhihao Zeng, Lian Fangchen, Ruoxin Wang	M,M,M,M,F,F	6	Windows	1	Xianjian Qixia Zhuan	China
Xiao Ao Jiang Hu 2: Wu Yue Jian Pai	2003	InterServ	InterServ	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Xiao Ao Jiang Hu	China
Xin Jianshi Qingyuan	2002	Kingsoft Corp.	Kingsoft Corp.	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Xin Juedai Shuangjiao	1999	Unistar	UserJoy	RPG	Fantasy		M	1	Windows	1		Taiwan
Xin Juedai Shuangjiao 3	2003	Unistar	UserJoy Technology	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Xin Juedai Shuangjiao	China
Xin Juedai Shuangjiao: Qianchuan	2006	Unistar	UserJoy Technology	RPG	Fantasy	Xiaoxu Lu	F	1	Windows	1	Xin Juedai Shuangjiao	China
Xin Xianjian Qixia Zhuan	2003	Unistar	Softstar Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Xin Yujian Hen	2004	GameDreamer	GameDreamer	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
X-Men: Legends	2004	Activision	Raven Software	Action RPG	Superheroes	Rik Schaffer	M	1	Xbox, PS2, Gamecube	1	X-Men	USA
X-Men: Legends II - Rise of Apocalypse	2005	Activision	Raven Software, SuperVillain Studios	Action RPG	Superheroes	Gregg Narholz	M	1	Xbox	1	X-Men	USA
Xuyen	2011	Notorious Games	Notorious Games	MMORPG	Post-Apocalyptic, Fantasy	Maurici Grau Ribes	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Xuanyuan Fu Mo Lu	2003	Softstar Entertainment	DOMO Production	RPG, Strategy	Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Xuanyuan Jian 3 Waizhuan: Tian zhi Hen	2000	Softstar Entertainment	DOMO Production	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Xuanyuan Jian	China
Xuanyuan Jian 3: Yun he Shan de Bi Duan	1999	Softstar	DOMO Production	RPG	Historical, Fantasy	ShinRay Woo, HongZhang Su	M,M	2	Windows	1	Xuanyuan Jian 3	Taiwan
Xuanyuan Jian 4: Hei Long Wu xi Yun Fei Yang	2002	Softstar Entertainment Inc.	DOMO Production	RPG	Fantasy	Shin Ruel Wu, Zeng Zhihao	M,M	2	Windows	1	Xuanyuan Jian	China
Xuanyuan Jian 5: Yi Jian Ling Yun Shan Hai Qing	2006	Softstar Entertainment	Softstar Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy	ShinRay Woo, Zhihao Zeng	M,M	2	Windows	1	Xuanyuan Jian	China
Xuanyuan Jian Waizhuan: Cang zhi Tao	2004	Softstar Entertainment	DOMO Production	RPG	Fantasy	Shin Ruel Wu, Zeng Zhihao	M,M	2	Windows	1	Xuanyuan Jian	China
Xuanyuan Jian Waizhuan: Nan zhi Yun	2007	Softstar Entertainment	Softstar Entertainment	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Xuanyuan Jian	China
Yakata: Nightmare Project	1998	ASK Co	Chime Corp	RPG	Mystery	Daisuke Minamizawa, Kaichiro Shiomi	M,M	2	PS1	1		Japan
Yakuza	2005	Sega	Amusement Vision	Action RPG	Modern	Hidenori Shoji, Sachio Ogawa, Keitaro Hanada, Fumio Ito, Yuri Fukuda	M,M,M,M,F	5	PS2	1	Yakuza	Japan
Yakuza 2	2008	Sega	Amusement Vision	Action RPG	Modern, Fighting	Hidenori Shoji, Hideki Sakamoto, Norihiko Hibino, Takahiro Iwatsuki	M,M,M,M	4	PS2, PS3, Wii U	3	Yakuza	Japan
Yakuza 3	2009	Sega	Amusement Vision	Action RPG	Modern, Fighting	Hidenori Shoji, Kenjiro Koyama, Takahiro Kai, Hiroyoshi Kato, Yoshio Yano, Hideki Sakamoto	M,M,M,M,M,M	6	PS3	1	Yakuza	Japan
Yakuza 4	2011	Sega	Amusement Vision	Action RPG	Modern, Mystery	Kenichi Yokoi, Yasuhiro Takagi, Mitsuharu Fukuyama, Ryosuke Okano, Chihiro Aoki, Takahiro Kase, Yoichi Kanatani	M,M,M,M,M,F,M	7	PS3	1	Yakuza	Japan
Yakuza: Dead Souls	2012	Sega	Ryu ga Gotoku Studio	Action RPG	Horror, Post-Apocalyptic	Yuri Fukuda, Susumu Tsukagoshi, Yuchi Kanatani, Chihiro Aoki, Takahiro Kase	F,M,M,F,M	5	PS3	1	Yakuza	Japan
Yendorian Tales: The Tyrants of Thaine	1999	Spectrum Pacific Publishing	SW Games	RPG	Fantasy	Timothy Smith	M	1	DOS	1	Yendorian Tales	USA
Yeonghoo Gilyeong Larenza	1998	Hyundai	Family Production	Action RPG	Post-apocalyptic				Windows	1		South Korea

Yggdra Union: We'll Never Fight Alone	2006	King, Atlus	King	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Minako Adachi, Shigeki Hayashi, Kiyoto Otani, Nobuo Kiyota, Ryoko Nakamura	F,M,M,M,F	5	GBA, PSP	2		Japan
Yohoho! Puzzle Pirates	2004	gamigo AG	Three Rings Design Inc.	MMORPG, Puzzle	Pirates				Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		USA
Yōjo Ranbu 2	1997	Zone	Zone	RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1	Yōjo Ranbu	Japan
Yoru ga Kuru! Square of the Moon	2002	Alice Soft	Alice Soft	RPG, Dungeon Crawler	Anime, Fantasy	Shade	M	1	Windows	2	Yoru ga Kuru	Japan
Young Justice: Legacy	2013	Little Orbit	Freedom Factory	Action RPG	Fantasy	Eduardo de la Iglesia	M	1	Windows, X360, PS3	3		Spain
Ys Eternal	1998	Nihon Falcom	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Yuzo Koshino, Mieko Ishikawa, Hideya Nagata, Masaya Hashimoto	M,F,M,M	4	Windows	1	Ys	Japan
Ys Eternal	2000	Nihon Falcom	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Hirofumi Matsuzaka, Atsushi Shirakawa, Masaru Nakajima, Hayato Sonoda, Hirokazu Matsumura, Wataru Ichibashi	M,M,M,M,M,M	6	Windows	2	Ys	Japan
Ys Origin	2006	Nihon Falcom	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG, RPG	Fantasy	Hayato Sonoda, Takahiro Utsunaga, Ryo Takehira, Yuuto Koshino, Mieko Ishikawa, Hideya Nagata	M,M,M,M,F,M	6	Windows	1	Ys	Japan
Ys Seven	2009	Nihon Falcom	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Hayato Sonoda, Takahiro Utsunaga, Saki Momiyama, Masanori Otsuki	M,M,F,M	4	Windows, PSP	2	Ys	Japan
Ys VI: The Ark of Naphhtim	2003	Konami	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Sound Team JDK	K	1	Windows, PS2	2	Ys	Japan
Yc: Memories of Celceta	2012	Nihon Falcom, Xseed Games, NIS America	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Hayato Sonoda, Takahiro Utsunaga, Saki Momiyama, Tomokatsu Haguda	M,M,F,M	4	PS Vita, Windows	2	Ys	Japan
Yc: The Oath in Feighana	2005	Nihon Falcom	Nihon Falcom	Action RPG	Fantasy	Hayato Sonoda, Wataru Ichibashi, Takahide Murayama	M,M,M	3	Windows	1	Ys	Japan
Yu Yu Hakusho: Ghost Files - Spirit Detective	2003	Atari	Sensory Sweep	Tactical RPG	Anime, Fantasy	David M. Rushton, Jason Perkins	M,M	2	GBA	2	Yu Yu Hakusho	USA
Yu Yu Hakusho: Ghost Files - Tournament Tactics	2004	Atari	Sensory Sweep Studios	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Jason Perkins, David M. Rushton	M,M	2	GBA	1	Yu Yu Hakusho	USA
Yu Yu Hakusho: Tournament Tactics	2004	Atari	Sensory Sweep	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Jason Perkins, David M. Rushton	M,M	2	GBA	1	Yu Yu Hakusho	USA
Yu-Gi-Oh! Capsule Monster Coliseum	2004	Konami	Konami	Strategy, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Tatsuya Fujiwara, Susumu Nakamura	M,M	2	PS2	1	Yu-Gi-Oh	Japan
Yu-Gi-Oh! Reshev of Destruction	2003	Konami	Konami	Card-based RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Norihiko Hibino, Masashi Watanabe, Shuichi Kobori, Toshihisa Furusawa	M,M,M,M	4	GBA	1	Yu-Gi-Oh	Japan
Yu-Gi-Oh! The Eternal Duelist Soul	2001	Konami	Konami	Card-based RPG	Anime, Fantasy				GBA	1	Yu-Gi-Oh	Japan
Yu-Gi-Oh! The Falsebound Kingdom	2002	Konami	Konami	RTS, RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Waichiro Ozaki	M	1	Gamecube	1	Yu-Gi-Oh	Japan
Yu-Gi-Oh! The Sacred Cards	2002	Konami	Konami	Strategy, Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Kazuki Murakoa, Norihiko Hibino, Sōtarō Tojima, Masashi Watanabe	M,M,M,M	4	GBA	1	Yu-Gi-Oh	Japan
Yukikuri no Meliys	2010	Microsoft	HOSSIE	Action RPG	Eroge, Fantasy				X360	1		Japan
Yuliyul Kangho	2001	Sego Entertainment	KRGsoft	Action RPG	Fantasy				Windows	1		South Korea
Z.N.P.	2010	NIS America	Nippon Ichi	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Masaharu Iwata, Marabu Namiki, Kimhiro Abe, Mitsuhiko Kaneda, Noriyuki Kamikura, Azusa Chiba, Yoshimi Kudo	M,M,M,M,M,F,M	7	PSP	1		Japan
Zanzarah: The Hidden Portal	2002	Xicat Interactive	Funatics Software	Action RPG	Fantasy	Karina Gretese, Lars Hammer, Matthias Steinwachs	F,M,M	3	Windows	1		Germany
Zenfar: The Adventure	2001	Crystal Interactive Software	Dynamic Adventures Inc.	RPG	Sci-Fi	Lars Djupget	M	1	Windows	1		USA
Zenonia	2008	Gamevil Inc.	Gamevil Inc.	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy				PSP, Nintendo DS, Android, iOS, Windows Mobile, Bada, Zeebo	7	Zenonia	South Korea
Zenonia	2009	Gamevil Inc.	Gamevil Inc.	Action RPG	Fantasy	Sominai	?	1	Nintendo DS, iOS, Zeebo	4		South Korea
Zenonia 2: The Lost Memories	2010	Gamevil Inc.	Gamevil Inc.	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Sominai, MelodyShoe	7,X	2	Android, iOS	2	Zenonia	South Korea
Zenonia 3: The Midgard Story	2011	Gamevil Inc.	Gamevil Inc.	Action RPG	Fantasy	Sominai, Jin Young Lee	7,M	2	iOS	1	Zenonia	South Korea
Zhenglian Fengwuzhuan	2003	Unistar	FunYours Technology	RPG	Anime, Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Zhengtu	2008	Zhengtu Network	Zhengtu Network	MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Zigfrak	2013	Entheogen Studios	Entheogen Studios	Action RPG	Sci-Fi	Alex Ayars	M	1	Windows, Mac OS X, Linux	3		USA
Zili O'll	1999	KOEI Co	KOEI Co	RPG	Fantasy	Hiromi Mizutani	M	1	PS1	1		Japan
Zlatogorye 2	2003	Russobit-M	Burst Creative Team	RPG	Fantasy	Alexander Fomichev	M	1	Windows	1	Zlatogorye	Russia
Zoids Assault	2008	Atlus	Takara Tomy	Strategy, RPG	Sci-Fi				X360	1	Zoids	USA
Zoids: Legacy	2004	Atari	Amedeo Co.	RPG	Anime, Sci-Fi	Naofumi Tsunoyama, Takuya Haraoka	M,M	2	GBA	1	Zoids	Japan
Zombie Exodus	2011	Hosted Games	Jim Dattilo	Text-based, Adventure, RPG	Horror	NO MUSIC			Android, Browser-based, iOS	4		USA
Zone of the Enders: The Fist of Mars	2001	Konami	Konami, Sunrise	Tactical RPG	Fantasy	Maki Kirika, Akihiro Honda, Norihiko Hibino, Toshiyuki Kaluta, Shuichi Kobori	F,M,M,M,M	5	PS2	1	Zone of the Enders	Japan
Zu Online	2007	IGG	IGG	MMORPG	Historical, Fantasy				Windows	1		China
Zubo	2008	EA	EA Bright Light	Strategy, RPG	Music	Christian Henson, Joe Henson, Alexis Smith	M,M,F	3	Nintendo DS	1		UK
Zweill	2002	Taito Corporation	Nihon Falcom Corp.	Action RPG	Anime, Fantasy	Hayato Sonoda, Wataru Ichibashi, Maiko Hattori, Atsushi Shirakawa	M,M,F,M	4	Windows, PS2, PSP	3		Japan

Appendix 2.1

Description of a typical *D&D* game in 2018 by user 'danstu' on Reddit. Several spelling errors have been corrected to increase readability:

"It's basically collaborative storytelling, with some game mechanics to give the story some randomness.

One player is the DM - dungeon master (often game master or keeper in similar rpgs). The dungeon master's job is to play every character but the main party. If you're familiar with video game rpgs, they [are] basically the computer. The[y] control the shopkeepers the party interacts with, the monsters, etc. As such this is usually the role for the person with the most experience in DnD, as it's a lot to take on for a new player.

Everyone else plays individual party members. They pick their race/class and keep track of that character's exp/inventory/skills.

You[r] character has six main stats,

- strength - used for fighting with brute-force weapons (axes, great swords, etc)
- dexterity - used for things that require fine movements like lockpicking, or acrobatic feats. Some classes also use it for skill-based weapons (bow+arrow, rapier, knives)
- constitution - effects health. Mainly, the more Con you have, the more you max HP is
- wisdom - intuition, used for when you feel like there's something weird going on, but you can't put your finger on it also used for some spellcasting
- intelligence - book knowledge, used for spell casting, and stuff like knowing the history of the world.
- charisma - ability to persuade others. used mostly for social situations, but also used for some spellcasting.

In non-combat situations, you would roll a d20 (die with 20 sides) whenever you want to do something, and your DM picks a number you have to beat in order to accomplish your goal, representing how hard it is. For something like opening a door, you wouldn't have to roll, since it's assumed your character knows how to do that. For kicking a door open, you'd roll a d20, and add a bonus to your roll based on your strength, since it's a physical action you're trying to do. To pick the lock, you'd add a bonus for dexterity. Your DM would decide what the appropriate stat is for things that are less straight forward

Combat is turn-based, and can either be done with just describing positions and imagining the scene (ends up playing like most turn-based RPGs) or can be played on a grid, at which point it basically becomes a tactics game.

When you attack with a weapon, you again roll a d20, and add a bonus based on your skills. You need to roll higher than the enemy's Armor Class (their defense stat) if you roll below the armor class, then your attack bounces off their shield doing no damage. If you roll above, you hit and do the appropriate damage.

When you cast a spell, some of them hit automatically, so you don't need to worry about Armor Class. Instead, the enemy rolls a saving throw. This will depend on the spell you're casting, but is flavored as them jumping out of the way to dodge your fireball, or having a strong enough constitution to shake off your poison, etc. Usually if they succeed their save, they only take half damage."

Appendix 2.2

Tracklist of the AD&D “First Quest: The Music”:

	Track Title	Composer and Performer
Disk 1 – Side 1		
1	<i>The Quest Begins</i>	Phil Thornton
2	<i>The Bloodguard</i>	Denis Haines
3	<i>Elves</i>	Dave Miller/Phil Thornton
4	<i>The Sorcerer’s Apprentice</i>	Steve Parsons
5	<i>The Caravan</i>	Denis Haines
6	<i>The Heroes Ride Out</i>	Barrie Guard
Disk 1 – Side 2		
1	<i>Gnomes</i>	Denis Haines
2	<i>Hobgoblins</i>	Steve Parsons
3	<i>The River of Souls</i>	Dave Miller
4	<i>The Gates of Hell</i>	Dave Miller/Phil Thornton
Disk 2 – Side 1		
1	<i>The Living Dead</i>	Denis Haines
2	<i>Wandering Monsters</i>	Phil Thornton
3	<i>The Hall of Spiders</i>	Dave Miller/Phil Thornton
4	<i>The Dragon Passages</i>	The Device
5	<i>The Room of Pools</i>	Denis Haines
Disk 2 – Side 2		
1	<i>The Lost Caves</i>	Dave Miller/Phil Thornton
2	<i>In the Sorcerers Cave</i>	Dave Miller
3	<i>The Summoning</i>	Phil Thornton
4	<i>The Crystal Chalice</i>	Steve Parsons
5	<i>The Return of Light</i>	Phil Thornton
6	<i>The Aftermath</i>	G.P. Hall

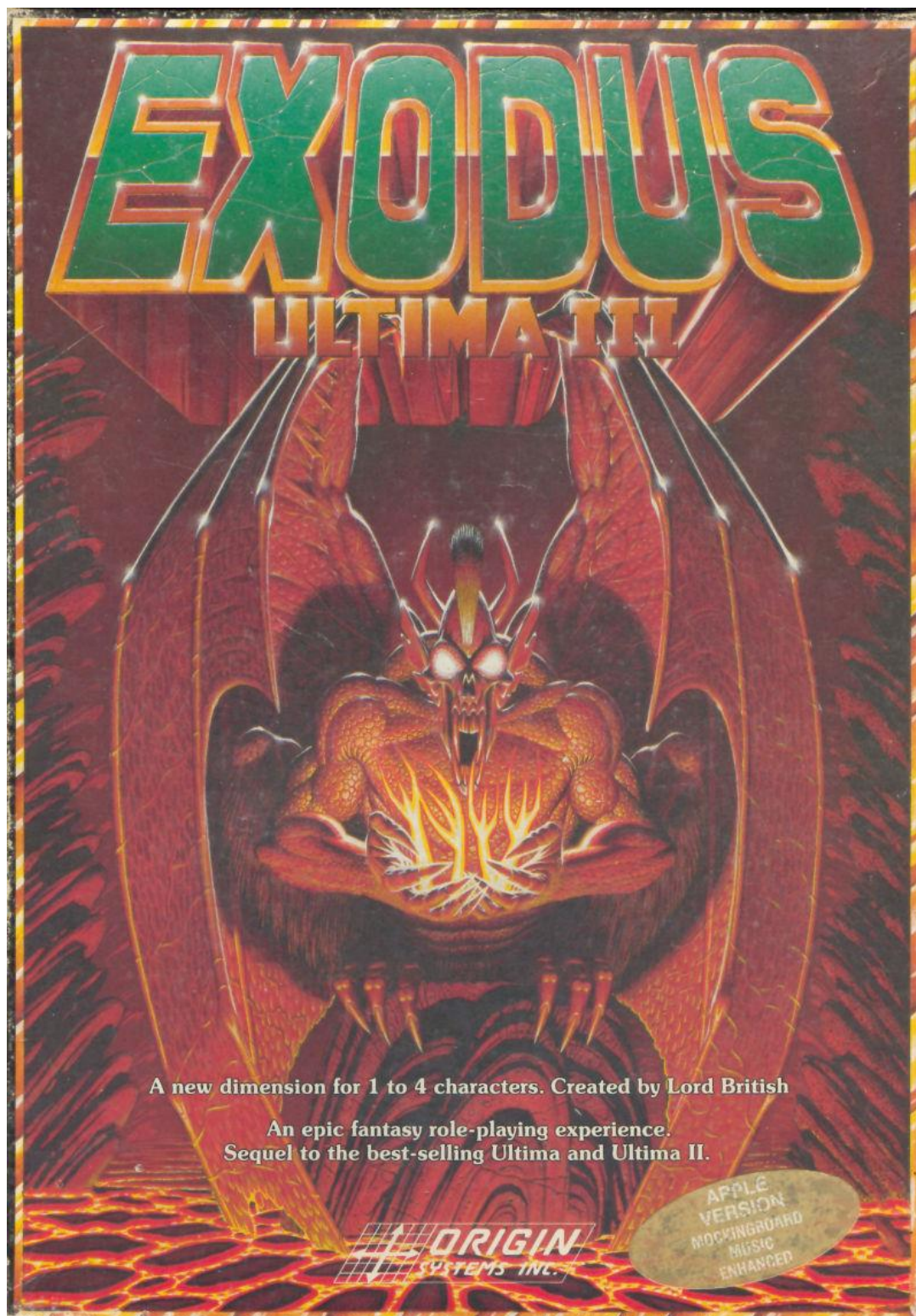
Appendix 2.3

Table of Home Video-Game Consoles by Date and Country

Developer	Console	Date Released	Country
Magnavox	Odyssey	1972	USA
Fairchild Semiconductor	Channel F	1976	USA
RCA	Studio II	1977	USA
Atari	VCS (2600)	1977	USA
Bally	Professional Arcade	1977	USA
Magnavox	Odyssey 2	1978	USA
Mattel	Intellivision	1980	USA
General Consumer Electronics	Vectrex	1982	USA
Coleco	Colecovision	1982	USA
Atari	5200 SuperSystem	1982	USA
Nintendo	NES	1983	Japan
Sega	Master System	1985	Japan
Atari	7800 ProSystem	1986	USA
NEC	TruboGrafx-16	1987	USA
Sega	Genesis (Mega Drive)	1988	Japan
SNK	NEO GEO	1990	Japan
Nintendo	SNES (Super Famicom)	1991	Japan
Philips	CDi	1991	Netherlands
3DO	3DO	1993	USA
Atari	Jaguar	1993	USA
Sony	PlayStation	1994	Japan
Sega	Saturn	1995	Japan
Nintendo	N64	1996	Japan
Sega	Dreamcast	1999	Japan
Sony	PlayStation 2	2000	Japan
Microsoft	Xbox	2001	USA
Nintendo	Game Cube	2001	Japan
Microsoft	Xbox 360	2005	USA
Sony	PlayStation 3	2006	Japan
Nintendo	Wii	2006	Japan
Nintendo	Wii-U	2012	Japan
Sony	PlayStation 4	2013	Japan
Microsoft	Xbox One	2013	USA
Nintendo	Switch	2017	Japan

Appendix 2.4

The box cover art to *Ultima III: Exodus* – released for the *Apple II*. Image taken from MobyGames.



Appendix 2.5

Score for “Fear of the Heavens” – the accompanying music for the *Secret of Mana* title screen by Hiroki Kikuta

Secret of Mana - "Fear of the Heavens"

Hiroki Kikuta

Sheet music for "Fear of the Heavens" from Secret of Mana, composed by Hiroki Kikuta. The score is in 4/4 time and features a tempo of $\text{♩} = \frac{8}{77}$. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

The score is divided into three systems, each marked with a double bar line and repeat sign (//).

System 1 (Measures 1-4):

- Piano:** Features a complex melody with triplets and triple reverb. The right hand has a continuous triplet pattern, while the left hand has a more rhythmic accompaniment.
- Horn in F:** Plays a melodic line with a key signature change to one flat (Bb) in the fourth measure.
- Strings:** Provides a harmonic foundation with sustained chords.

System 2 (Measures 5-8):

- Pno.:** Continues the piano part with similar triplet patterns and reverb effects.
- Hn.:** Horn in F, continuing the melodic line.
- Cym.:** Cymbal, with a single hit in the eighth measure.
- Str.:** Strings, continuing the harmonic support.

System 3 (Measures 9-12):

- Fl.:** Flute, entering in the ninth measure with a melodic line.
- Pno.:** Piano, continuing the complex melody with double reverb.
- Cym.:** Cymbal, with a single hit in the ninth measure.
- Str.:** Strings, continuing the harmonic support.
- E. Bass:** Electric Bass, providing a low-frequency accompaniment.

12

Fl.

Pno.

Str.

E. Bass

15

Fl.

Pno.

Cym.

Str.

E. Bass

pp

17 (8)

Pno.

Cym.

S.+A.

Str.

E. Bass

mf

19 (8)

Pno.

S.+A.

Str.

E. Bass

Measures 19 and 20 of the musical score. The piano part consists of a continuous eighth-note triplet pattern. The strings and bass provide harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns.



21 (8)

Pno.

S.+A.

Str.

E. Bass

Measures 21 and 22 of the musical score. The piano part continues with the eighth-note triplet pattern. The strings and bass provide harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns.



23 (8)

Pno.

S.+A.

Str.

E. Bass

Measures 23 and 24 of the musical score. The piano part continues with the eighth-note triplet pattern. The strings and bass provide harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns.

24 (8)

Pno.

Hn.

S.+A.

Str.

E. Bass



26

Fl.

Pno.

Hn.

S.+A.

Str.

E. Bass

Semiquaver reverb

Appendix 2.6

Transcription of “Terra’s Theme” from *Final Fantasy VI* by Nobuo Uematsu

Final Fantasy VI - "Terra's Theme"

Nobuo Uematsu

$\text{♩}=80$ Fade in

This musical score is for the first ten measures of "Terra's Theme" from Final Fantasy VI. The score is written for a full band and includes the following parts:

- Panpipes:** Measures 1-4 are rests, followed by a melodic entry in measure 5.
- Jazz Guitar:** Plays a continuous eighth-note melody throughout measures 1-4.
- Strings:** Provides harmonic support with sustained chords in measures 1-4.
- Percussion:** Features a steady eighth-note pattern with triplets in measures 1-4.

Measures 5-8 are marked with a repeat sign (//). The parts continue with more complex melodic and harmonic development, including triplets in the bass and percussion.

Measures 9-10 are also marked with a repeat sign (//). The score concludes with a final melodic flourish in the Panpipes and a sustained harmonic texture in the strings.

15

Pan.

Str.

A. Bass

Perc.

S.Perc.

20

Pan.

Str.

A. Bass

Perc.

S.Perc.

25

Pan.

Str.

A. Bass

Perc.

S.Perc.

30

Pan.

Str.

A. Bass

Perc.

S.Perc.



35

Pan.

Hn.

J. Gtr.

Str.

A. Bass

Perc.

S.Perc.

40

Pan.

Hn.

J. Gtr.

Str.

A. Bass

Perc.



45

Pan.

Hn.

J. Gtr.

Str.

A. Bass

Perc.

50

Pan.

Hn.

J. Gtr.

Str.

A. Bass

Timp.

Perc.



54

Hn.

J. Gtr.

Str.

A. Bass

Timp.

Perc.

57

Hn.

J. Gtr.

Str.

A. Bass

Timp.

Perc.



60

Hn.

J. Gtr.

Str.

A. Bass

Timp.

Perc.

63

Hn.

J. Gtr.

Str.

A. Bass

Timp.

Perc.



66

Hn.

J. Gtr.

Str.

A. Bass

Timp.

Perc.

69

Hn.

J. Gtr.

Str.

A. Bass

Timp.

Perc.

3

72

Pan.

Hn.

J. Gtr.

Str.

Perc.

3

Appendix 2.7

Transcription of “Lonely Halls” from *Secret of Evermore* by Jeremy Soule

Secret of Evermore - Lonely Halls

Jeremy Soule

$\text{♩} = 150$

Ocarina *f*

Ocarina (Echo 1) *mp*

Ocarina (Echo 2) *p*

Oboe

Harp *mp*

Violin 1 *mp*

Violin 2 *mp*

Viola *mp*

Violoncello *mp*

8

Oc. *f*

Oc. *f*

Oc. *f*

Ob.

Hp.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

15

Oc.

Oc.

Oc.

Ob.

Hp.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

pp



23

Oc.

Oc.

Oc.

Ob.

Hp.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

p

30

Oc.

Oc.

Oc.

Ob.

Hp.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

p

p

36

Oc.

Oc.

Oc.

Ob.

Hp.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

p

p

Appendix 2.8

Transcription of “Take Up the Cross” from *Tales of Phantasia* by Motoi Sakuraba

Tales of Phantasia - "Take Up the Cross" (Battle Theme)

Motoi Sakuraba

♩ = 160

Lead 1 (Square)

Pad 4 (Choir)

Strings

Synth Harp

Bass Guitar

Percussion

♩ = 160

This system contains the first six staves of the musical score. The tempo is marked as 160 beats per minute. The instruments are Lead 1 (Square), Pad 4 (Choir), Strings, Synth Harp, Bass Guitar, and Percussion. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Lead 1 part has a long rest followed by a melodic phrase. Pad 4 plays a blocky chordal accompaniment. Strings play a sustained low note. Synth Harp plays a continuous arpeggiated pattern. Bass Guitar plays a steady eighth-note line. Percussion features a complex pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with many beamed notes.

5

Lead 1

Str.

Synth. (Hp.)

Bass

Perc.

This system contains staves 5 through 10. Lead 1 has a long rest followed by a melodic phrase. Str. (Strings) has a long rest followed by a sustained low note. Synth. (Hp.) continues the arpeggiated pattern. Bass continues the eighth-note line. Perc. continues the complex rhythmic pattern.

9

Lead 1

Br.

Pad 4

Str.

Synth. (Hp.)

Bass

Perc.

This system contains staves 9 through 14. Lead 1 has a long rest followed by a melodic phrase. Br. (Brass) has a long rest followed by a melodic phrase. Pad 4 has a long rest followed by a sustained low note. Str. (Strings) has a long rest followed by a sustained low note. Synth. (Hp.) continues the arpeggiated pattern. Bass continues the eighth-note line. Perc. continues the complex rhythmic pattern.

14

Br.

Pad 4

Str.

Bass

Perc.



19

Lead 1

Pad 2

Str.

Synth. (Hp.)

Bass

Perc.



24

Lead 1

Pad 2

Str.

Synth. (Saw.)

Synth. (Hp.)

Bass

Perc.

29

Lead 1

Pad 2

Str.

Synth. (Hp.)

Bass

Perc.

34

Lead 1

Pad 2

Str.

Synth. (Saw.)

Synth. (Hp.)

Bass

Perc.

38

Str.

Synth. (Saw.)

Synth. (Hp.)

Bass

Perc.

42

Pad 4

Str.

Synth (Saw.)

Synth. (Hp.)

Bass

Perc.

46

Str.

Synth (Saw.)

Synth. (Hp.)

Bass

Perc.

Appendix 2.9

Transcription of “Aerith’s Theme” from *Final Fantasy VII* by Nobuo Uematsu

Final Fantasy VII - "Aeris' Theme"

Nobuo Uematsu

♩ = 69

Flute

Horn in F

Trombone

Harp

Piano

♩ = 69

Strings

Picc.

This musical score system includes parts for Flute, Horn in F, Trombone, Harp, Piano, and Strings. The Flute part features a Piccolo (Picc.) entry. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 69. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score shows a double bar line and repeat signs, indicating a first ending.



7

Fl.

Ob.

Hn.

Tbn.

Hp.

Str.

This musical score system continues the arrangement with parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Horn (Hn.), Trombone (Tbn.), Harp (Hp.), and Strings (Str.). The Flute part begins with a measure number of 7. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The key signature remains one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

13

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Hp.

Str.



20

Pic.
Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Tbn.

Hp.

Str.

+Tba.

27

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Tbn.

Str.



33

Ob.

Pno.

Appendix 2.10

Transcription of “One Winged Angel” from *Final Fantasy VII* by Nobuo Uematsu created through a MIDI import of “lb2.mid” from the Windows version of the game into Avid Sibelius Ultimate.

Final Fantasy VII - One Winged Angel

"lb2.mid"

Nobuo Uematsu

Edited by James S. Tate

0.0"
1.1
lb2a

SECTION A:

Introductory sub-section

$\text{♩} = 120$

Flute

Horn in F

Horn in F

Trumpet in B \flat

Trombone

Tuba

Timpani

Taiko Drum

Percussion I Snare

Percussion II Rim shot

Percussion III Bass Drum

Percussion IV Crash Cymbal

Percussion V Splash Cymbal

Tubular Bells

Piano

Transcribed Recorded Choir

Choir (Synth)

Violin I (a)

Violin I (b)

Violin II (a)

Violin II (b)

Viola

Cello I

Cello II

409

11

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

SECTION A:
21 Transition sub-section

18

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

21

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a large ensemble. Measures 18-20 are in 4/4 time. In measure 18, the Tuba and Trombone play a triplet of eighth notes. The Tbn. and Tba. play eighth notes. The Timp. plays a quarter note. The Taiko plays a quarter note. Perc. I and II play eighth notes. Perc. III, IV, and V are silent. The Tub. B. is silent. The Pno. and Choir are silent. In measure 19, the Tuba and Trombone play a triplet of eighth notes. The Tbn. and Tba. play eighth notes. The Timp. plays a quarter note. The Taiko plays a quarter note. Perc. I and II play eighth notes. Perc. III, IV, and V are silent. The Tub. B. is silent. The Pno. and Choir are silent. In measure 20, the Tuba and Trombone play a triplet of eighth notes. The Tbn. and Tba. play eighth notes. The Timp. plays a quarter note. The Taiko plays a quarter note. Perc. I and II play eighth notes. Perc. III, IV, and V are silent. The Tub. B. is silent. The Pno. and Choir are silent. Measure 21 is in 7/8 time. The Fl. plays a half note. The Hn. and Tpt. play a half note. The Tbn. and Tba. play a half note. The Timp. plays a half note. The Taiko plays a half note. Perc. I and II play a half note. Perc. III, IV, and V are silent. The Tub. B. is silent. The Pno. and Choir are silent. The Synth Choir is silent. The Vln. Ia and Vln. Ib play a half note. The Vln. IIa and Vln. IIb play a half note. The Vla. plays a half note. The Vc. I and Vc. II play a half note.

23

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

SECTION A:
Continuation sub-section

26

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

26

Synth
Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. Ila

Vln. Ilb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

28

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

30

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

32

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

34

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

Es - tuans in - te-rius

36

37

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

i - ra ve - he-men-ti Es - tuans in - te-rius i - ra ve - he-men-ti Se - phi - roth Se - phi - roth

43

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

Es - tuans in - te-rius i - ra ve - he men-ti Es - tuans in - te-rius i - ra ve - he-men-ti Se - phi - roth

SECTION B:
Sub-section (b)

49

52

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Se - phi - roth Sors im-ma-nis Et in-an-is Sors im-ma-nis

52

Synth

Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

SECTION B:
60 Sub-section (a')

57

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Et in-an-is Es - tuans in - te-rius i - ra ve - he-men-ti Es - tuans in - te-rius i - ra ve - he-men-ti

60

Synth

Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

SECTION C:

68 Instrumental Section

64

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth

Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

Se - phi - roth

Se - phi - roth

71

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

76

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

82

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

89 92

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

96

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

102

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

pp

SECTION D:
Choir Coda

105

106

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth
Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

f

mf

Ve-ni, ve-ni, ve-ni-as, Ne me mo-ri fa-ci-as, Ve-ni, ve-ni, ve-ni-as, Ne me mo-ri fa-ci-as,

106

110

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

Ve - ni, ve - ni, ve - ni - as, Ne me mo - ri fa - ci - as, Ve - ni, ve - ni, ve - ni - as, Ne me mo - ri fa - ci - as,

114

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

Glor - i - o - sa Gen - e - ro - sa, Glor - i - o - sa Gen - e - ro - sa,
 Ve - ni, ve - ni, ve - ni - as, Ne me mo - ri fa - ci - as, Ve - ni, ve - ni, ve - ni - as, Ne me mo - ri fa - ci - as,

118

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

Glor - i - o - sa Gen - e - ro - sa, Glor - i - o - sa

Ve - ni, ve - ni, ve - ni - as, Ne me mo - ri fa - ci - as, Ve - ni, ve - ni, ve - ni - as,

121 End of Loop

Fl.

Hn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Taiko

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Perc. V

Tub. B.

Pno.

Choir

Synth Choir

Vln. Ia

Vln. Ib

Vln. IIa

Vln. IIb

Vla.

Vc. I

Vc. II

Gen - e - ro - sa, Se - phi - roth! Se - phi - roth!

Ne me mo - ri fa - ci - as, Se - phi - roth! Se - phi - roth!

End of Loop

Appendix 3.1

Proposed correct transcription of the *Oblivion* main theme with Sweeney's original for comparison.

Proposed Correct Transcription for the *Oblivion* main theme by Jeremy Soule. This is based on the cue titled 'Reign of the Septims' from the OST and is the piece heard during the title sequence of the game ([audio track 8.01](#))



Sweeney Original (2014, p. 192):



Appendix 3.2

Transcription of the *Pillars of Eternity* main theme 'Eora' by Justin Bell.

Pillars of Eternity - Eora

[illegible]

2 *11*

Fl. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Ob.

Cl. *mp*

Bsn.

Hn.

Tpts.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Perc. *pp* *ff*

W.Ch.

Choir *mp* *mp*

Hp. I

Vln. I *mf* *f*

Vln. II *mp* *mf* *f*

Vla. *mp* *mf* *f*

Vc. *mp* *mf* *f*

Db. *f* *arco* *f*

20 *poco rit.* . . . $\text{♩} = 75$ *mp* *rit.* . . . *a tempo* 3

Fl. *ff* *mp*

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn. *ff* *mp* *ff*

Hn. *f* *f* *ff*

Tpts. *f* *f* *ff*

Tbn. *f* *f* *ff* *mf*

B. Tbn. *f* *f* *ff* *mf*

Tba. *f* *f* *ff* *mf*

Timp. *mf* *f*

Perc. *ff*

W.Ch.

Choir *pp*

Hp. I

Vln. I *poco rit.* . . . $\text{♩} = 75$ *ff* *mp* *ff* *f*

Vln. II *ff* *ff* *f*

Vla. *ff* *f*

Vc. *div.* *ff* *mp* *ff* *f*

Db. *ff* *mp* *ff*

4 32

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Tpts.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Timp.

Perc.

W.Ch.

Choir

Hp. I

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

f

ff

mf

pp

pizz.

Appendix 3.3

Transcription of “Aerith’s Theme – Home Again” from *Final Fantasy VII: Remake* by Nobuo Uematsu and arranged by Yoshinori Nakamura.

Final Fantasy VII: Remake - "Aerith's Theme - Home Again"

Composed by Nobuo Uematsu
Arranged by Yoshinori Nakamura

$\text{♩} = 70$

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb

Bassoon

Glockenspiel

Harp

Piano

Pad 2 (Warm)

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

5 **A**

2 Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Glock.

Hp.

Pno.

Pad 2

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

10 **B** **C** 3

Fl. *mp*

Ob.

Cl. div. *mp* a2. *mp*

Bsn. *mp* *mf*

Glock. *mp*

Hp.

Pno. *p* *Red.*

Pad 2

Vln. 1 div. *pp* *mp* a2. *pp*

Vln. 2 *pp* *mp* div. a2. *pp*

Vla. *pp* *mp* *mf* *pp*

Vc. *p* *mp* *pp*

Cb. pizz. *mp*

4 17 **poco rit.** **D** a tempo (♩=70)

Fl.

Ob. *mp dolce*

Cl.

Bsn. *p*

Glock. *p*

Hp. *p*

Pno. *p* *pp*
 * Ped. * Ped. * *sim.* Ped. *

Pad 2

Vln. 1 *div.* *mp* *mf*

Vln. 2 *div.* *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Cb. *mp*

23 5

Fl. *mf* *div.*

Ob.

Cl. *mf*

Bsn.

Glock.

Hp.

Pno. *sim.* *mf*

Pad 2

Vln. 1 *mf*

Vln. 2 *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Cb.

6 29

Fl. **E** a2. solo

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Glock.

Hp.

Pno. *p* *sim.*

Pad 2

Vln. 1 *pp* *p*

Vln. 2 *p*

Vla. *p* div. a2.

Vc.

Cb.

33 F a2. 7

Fl. *mp*

Ob.

Cl. *mp*

Bsn. *mp*

Glock. *mp*

Hp.

Pno. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Pad 2

Vln. 1 *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vln. 2 *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vla. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Vc. *mp* *mf* *mp*

Cb.

div.

Red. * *Red.* *

Appendix 6.1

Video Game Music Concert Programmes and Genres of Pieces Chosen

Album	Year	Game/Series	Track	Main Genre	Piece Type
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Wizardry</i>	Opening Theme	WRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Wizardry II</i>	Adventurer's Inn 3	WRPG	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Dragon Quest IV</i>	Palace Minuet	JRPG	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Dragon Quest IV</i>	Sea Breeze	JRPG	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Super Mario Bros</i>		Platform	
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Super Mario World</i>	Super Mario World	Platform	Other
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past</i>	Hyrule Castle	Adventure	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past</i>	Main Theme	Adventure	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Populous</i>	Bit Plane/It's a Process	God Game	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Populous</i>	Ending Theme	God Game	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Romance of the Three Kingdoms</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Romance of the Three Kingdoms II</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Final Fantasy IV</i>	Red Wings	JRPG	Character
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Final Fantasy IV</i>	Theme of Love	JRPG	Character
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Final Fantasy IV</i>	Ending Theme	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert - Tokyo	1991	<i>Dragon Quest III</i>	Into the Legend	JRPG	Special
Game Music Festival	1992	<i>Kalnov</i>	Theme Of Gamadelic/Kalnov Is Coming To Town		Other
Game Music Festival	1992	<i>Death Brade</i>	Gallant Savage	Beat 'em Up	Character
Game Music Festival	1992	<i>Vapor Trail</i>	Vapor Trail	Shoot 'em up	Other
Game Music Festival	1992	<i>Darius/Darius II</i>	Inorganic Beat/War Oh!	Scrolling Shooter	Other
Game Music Festival	1992	<i>Metal Black</i>	Born To Be Free	Scrolling Shooter	Special
Game Music Festival	1992	<i>Galactic Storm</i>	Prot Mind	Fighting	Special
Game Music Festival	1992	<i>Captain Commando</i>	Crime Jungle	Beat 'em Up	Special
Game Music Festival	1992	<i>Street Fighter II</i>	Street Fighter II Medley '92 Gmf Version	Fighting	Other
Game Music Festival	1992	<i>S.D.I.</i>	Medley	Action	Other
Game Music Festival	1992	<i>Strike Fighter</i>	Hyper City	Fighting	Area
Game Music Festival	1992		I Can Survive	Simulation	
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Mother 2</i>	Because I Love You	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Mother 2</i>	Eagle Land	JRPG	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>SimCity</i>	Village	City Building	Area

Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>SimCity</i>	Town	City Building	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Great Strategy Expert: Soldiers Walk</i>	Soldier's Rhapsody	TBS	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Nobunaga's Ambition</i>	Sky Rocket	TBS	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Nobunaga's Ambition</i>	Distant Mountains and Rivers	TBS	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Dragon Quest V</i>	Palace Trumpet	JRPG	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Dragon Quest V</i>	Bridal Waltz	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Wizardry V</i>	Opening Theme	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>EVO: Tale of 4.6 Billion Years</i>	In Admiration of Nature/Earth	Platform	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>EVO: Tale of 4.6 Billion Years</i>	Sorrow	Platform	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Sound Novel Otogirisou</i>	Lingering Morning Mist	Sound Novel	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Sound Novel Otogirisou</i>	Beyond the Sadness	Sound Novel	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Final Fantasy V</i>	Opening Theme	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Final Fantasy V</i>	Waltz Clavier	JRPG	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Final Fantasy V</i>	Town Theme	JRPG	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 2	1992	<i>Final Fantasy V</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Star Fox</i>	Main Theme	Shoot 'em up	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Fire Emblem 2</i>	God's Young Sage	JRPG	Character
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening</i>	Towards the Dreaming Island	Action/Adventure	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Mother 2</i>	Because I Love You	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Torneko's Great Adventure</i>	Torneko's Theme	JRPG	Character
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Torneko's Great Adventure</i>	And Here's a Little Waltz	JRPG	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>The War Era of Emperor Ki</i>	The Legendary Warriors		
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Dragon Quest V</i>	Almighty Boss Devil is Challenged	JRPG	Battle
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Soft-Boiled Hero</i>	Divertissement, the Fourth Movement	RTS	
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Secret of Mana</i>	Fear of the Angels	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Nobunaga's Ambition</i>	Introduction/Defeated Army/The Morning Bell	TBS	
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Lennus</i>	Nasukuoto	JRPG	
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Albert Odyssey</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Albert Odyssey</i>	God's People	JRPG	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Kabuki Story of Heaven's Magical Barrier</i>	Kabuki's Theme/In Retrospect		
Orchestral Game Music Concert 3	1993	<i>Elfaria</i>	Eruru's Song/Ending	JRPG	Special

Orchestral Game Music Concert 4	1994	<i>Lennus II</i>	In Admiration of the Gods/The Final Dungeon	JRPG	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 4	1994	<i>Stunt Race FX</i>	Special Trax	Racing	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 4	1994	<i>Super Mario Bros</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Orchestral Game Music Concert 4	1994	<i>Super Metroid</i>	Theme of Samus Aran/Galactic Warrior/Brinstar 1/Brinstar 2/Ending	Action/Adventure	Other
Orchestral Game Music Concert 4	1994	<i>Itadaki Street 2</i>	Sofie's Cavern	Party	Character
Orchestral Game Music Concert 4	1994	<i>Dragon Quest III</i>	Pastorale/Catastrophe	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 4	1994	<i>Uncharted Waters: New Horizons</i>	Visiting the Harbors of the World/Close to Home	JRPG	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 4	1994	<i>Night of the Kamaitachi</i>	Sequence	Visual Novel	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 4	1994	<i>Night of the Kamaitachi</i>	Two People Return Alive	Visual Novel	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 4	1994	<i>Albert Odyssey 2</i>	Together in the Glory of the Legend	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 4	1994	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Love Oath/Maria and Draco	JRPG	Character
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Kirby Super Deluxe</i>	The Gourmet Race/Collision Theme/Theme of Kiby's Triumphant Return	Platform	Other
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Super Mario World 2</i>	Yoshi's Athletic	Platform	Character
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Donkey Kong Country</i>	Water Music	Platform	Area
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Fire Emblem 2</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Dragon Quest VI</i>	Evil Motive/Satan's Castle/Shivering, Beating Heart	JRPG	Other
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Dragon Quest VI</i>	Flying Bed	JRPG	Character
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Glory of Heracles IV</i>	Atlantis's Memories/At the Edge of the Earth/Goblins' War	JRPG	Other
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Lennus II</i>	Erutsu Turbulent Journey	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Bounty Sword</i>	Invincible Knight	JRPG	Battle
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Iihatoovo Story</i>	Iihatoovo Hymn	JRPG	Special
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Seiken Densetsu 3</i>	Meridian Child	JRPG	Character
Orchestral Game Music Concert 5	1996	<i>Chrono Trigger</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Back in Time	2004	<i>International Karate</i>		Fighting	
Back in Time	2004	<i>Human Race, subtune 4</i>			Area
Back in Time	2004	<i>Think Cross</i>		Puzzle	
Back in Time	2004	<i>Mermaid Madness</i>		Platform	
Back in Time	2004	<i>Shamus Case II</i>		Shoot 'em up	
Back in Time	2004	<i>Black Lamp, subtune 3</i>		Scrolling Shooter	

Back in Time	2004	<i>Armageddon Man</i>		Strategy	
Back in Time	2004	<i>Sweet</i>			
Back in Time	2004	<i>Comic Bakery</i>		Action	
Back in Time	2004	<i>Task III</i>			
Back in Time	2004	<i>Breakdance</i>		Rhythm Game	
Back in Time	2004	<i>Spy vs Spy Live!</i>		Action	
A Night in Fantasia 2005	2005	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Hikari	JRPG	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2005	2005	<i>Onimusha</i>	Rising Sun, 1st Movement	Action/Adventure	
A Night in Fantasia 2005	2005	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	The Oath	JRPG	Character
A Night in Fantasia 2005	2005	<i>Gran Turismo 4</i>	Moon Over the Castle	Racing	Area
A Night in Fantasia 2005	2005	<i>Ace Combat 5</i>	The Unsung War	Flight Simulator	
A Night in Fantasia 2005	2005	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
A Night in Fantasia 2005	2005	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	The Opened Way	Action/Adventure	
A Night in Fantasia 2005	2005	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	Main Theme	Action/Adventure	
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>Metal Gear Solid 2</i>	Main Theme	Action/Adventure	Special
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>Falling Things</i>	Medley		Other
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>PoPoLoCrois Story</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>Mother</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>Out Run</i>	Splash Wave	Racing	Area
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>Anubis</i>	Beyond the Bounds	Action	Area
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>Ys</i>		JRPG	
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>Romancing SaGa</i>	Opening Title	JRPG	Special
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>Monster Hunter</i>	Proof of a Hero	JRPG	Special
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>Ico</i>	You Were There	Action/Adventure	Special
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006		Namco Arcade Medley		Other
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	Medley	Adventure	Other
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>Final Fantasy</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Press Start 2006 - Symphony of Games	2006	<i>Super Smash Bros.</i>	Main Theme	Beat 'em Up	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Final Fantasy XII</i>	Opening Theme	JRPG	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Deltora Quest</i>	Main Theme	Action	
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Legend of Mana</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Xenosaga Episode I</i>	Gnosis	JRPG	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater</i>	Main Theme	Action/Adventure	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Super Mario Bros.</i>	Main Theme	Platform	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Tekken: Dark Resurrection</i>	Sunrise	Beat 'em Up	Other
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	Revived Power	Action/Adventure	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	Swift Horse	Action/Adventure	Battle
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	Counterattack	Action/Adventure	Battle

A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>World of Warcraft</i>	The Burning Crusade - Title Theme	MMORPG	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Tales of Legendia</i>	Requiem	JRPG	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Soul Calibur III</i>	Path of Destiny	Beat 'em Up	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Tales of Legendia</i>	The Prayers Become Power	JRPG	Area
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Odine Sphere</i>	Odine Sphere	JRPG	Other
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Xenosaga Episode I</i>	Zarathustra	JRPG	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Xenosaga Episode I</i>	World to be Born	JRPG	Special
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
A Night in Fantasia 2007	2007	<i>Kingdom Hearts II</i>	Fantasia Alla Marcia for Piano, Chorus and Orchestra	JRPG	Special
Eminence Symphony Orchestra - Passion	2007	<i>Xenosaga II</i>	Sakura	JRPG	Character
Eminence Symphony Orchestra - Passion	2007	<i>Chrono Cross</i>	Time's Scar	JRPG	Special
Eminence Symphony Orchestra - Passion	2007	<i>Chrono Cross</i>	In the Beach of Dreams - Another World	JRPG	Area
Eminence Symphony Orchestra - Passion	2007	<i>Xenosaga</i>	Pain	JRPG	Special
Eminence Symphony Orchestra - Passion	2007	<i>Chrono Cross</i>	Radical Dreamers	JRPG	Special
Eminence Symphony Orchestra - Passion	2007	<i>Seventh Seal</i>	Sailing to the World	JRPG	
Eminence Symphony Orchestra - Passion	2007	<i>Colors of Life</i>	Ferris Wheel		
Eminence Symphony Orchestra - Passion	2007	<i>.hack//Liminality</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Eminence Symphony Orchestra - Passion	2007	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	The Sunlit Earth	Action/Adventure	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2007	2007	<i>Kirby's Dreamland</i>	Kirby's Dreamland	Platform	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2007	2007	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Hikari	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2007	2007	<i>Super Mario Bros./Donkey Kong Country II/The Legend of Zelda</i>	Castles	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2007	2007	<i>Star Fox</i>	SNES Ending	Shoot 'em up	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2007	2007	<i>Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney</i>	Phoenix Overture	Graphic Adventure	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2007	2007	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Cid: Wings of Song	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2007	2007	<i>Halo</i>	Halo	FPS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2007	2007	<i>Tetris</i>	Theme A/Theme B	Puzzle	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2007	2007	<i>Medal of Honor</i>	Medal of Honor	FPS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Kirby's Dreamland 2</i>	Theme	Platform	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Super Mario 2</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Donkey Kong Country 2</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Kefka	JRPG	Character

Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Chrono Trigger</i>	Wind Scene	JRPG	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	Medley	Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Xenosaga</i>	Gnosis	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Cid: Wings of Song	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Medal of Honor</i>	Theme	FPS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Super Mario RPG</i>	Star Piece Battle	JRPG	Battle
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Tetris</i>	Theme A/Theme B	Puzzle	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Halo</i>	Requiem	FPS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2007	2007	<i>Sons of Maryland/Maryland Drinking Song</i>			
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>Super Smash Bros. Brawl</i>	Main Theme	Beat 'em Up	Special
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>LocoRoco</i>	LocoRoco Song	Platform	Special
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>ActRaiser</i>		Platform	Other
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>Shooting</i>	Medley	Shoot 'em up	Other
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>Ace Combat Zero: The Belkan War</i>	Zero	Combat Flight Simulator	Special
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	The Grotesque Ones/Revived Power	Action/Adventure	Battle
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>Fire Emblem</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007		Sega Sound Unit [H.]		Other
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007		ghm sound team		Other
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>Chrono Trigger</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion</i>		WRPG	
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>Super Mario Bros</i>	Course BGM Medley	Platform	Other
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>Castlevania</i>	Devil's Castle Dracula/The Seal of the Curse/Rondo of Blood	Action/Adventure	Area
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>Sakura Wars</i>	Manifesto! Imperial Flower Assault Troupe	JRPG	Battle
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>		JRPG	
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	Medley	Adventure	Other
Press Start 2007 - Symphony of Games	2007	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007		Classic Arcade Medley	Arcade	Other
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Liberi Fatali	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Halo</i>	Trilogy Suite	FPS	Other
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Suite	JRPG	Other

Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Civilization IV</i>	Baba Yetu	TBS	Special
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Medal of Honor</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Myst</i>		Graphic Adventure	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Starcraft II: Wings of Liberty</i>		RTS	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Space Invaders</i>		Arcade	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Super Mario Bros</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Super Mario Bros</i>	Piano Solo	Platform	Other
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Tron</i>		Arcade	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Warcraft</i>		RTS	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i>		Stealth	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 30/9/2007	2007	<i>Chrono Cross</i>		JRPG	
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2008	2008	<i>Star Fox SNES</i>	Credits	Shoot 'em up	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2008	2008	<i>Mother 3</i>	Oh, Buta Mask!	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2008	2008	<i>Super Smash Bros. Brawl</i>	Hyrules's Ocarina	Beat 'em Up	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2008	2008	<i>Warcraft II</i>	Tides of Darkness	RTS	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2008	2008	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Forcing Our Way	JRPG	Battle
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2008	2008	<i>Chrono Cross/Chrono Trigger</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2008	2008	<i>Odin Sphere</i>	Destinies Entwined	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2008	2008		SEGA Mega Medley		Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2008	2008	<i>Kirby Super Star</i>	Kirby Super Star Suite	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2008	2008	<i>Xenosaga</i>	Dämmerung	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Aerith's Theme	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Final Fantasy Versus XIII (Final Fantasy XV)</i>	Somnus	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Unreal Tournament</i>	Hall of Champions	FPS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Chrono Cross/Chrono Trigger</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	Medley for Brass Quartet	Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle

Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Super Mario 64</i>	Piano Medley	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	Old School Hyrule	Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Donkey Kong Country 2</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Secret of Mana</i>	Tender Secrets	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Final Fantasy Tactics</i>		JRPG	
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2008	2008	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	Puzzle	Special
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Wild Arms II: Second Ignition</i>		JRPG	
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Super Mario Galaxy</i>		Platform	
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Spelunker</i>		Platform	
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney</i>	Turnabout Trial	Graphic Adventure	Special
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Samurai Spirits</i>		Fighting	
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Monster Hunter</i>	Proof of a Hero	JRPG	Special
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean</i>	To the End of the Journey of Twinkling Stars	JRPG	Special
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Touch! Generations</i>	Medley		Other
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Ys</i>		JRPG	
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Professor Layton and the Mysterious Town</i>		Puzzle	
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Megaman 2</i>		Platform	
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Final Fantasy IX</i>	Melodies of Life	JRPG	Special
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>		Platform	
Press Start 2008 - Symphony of Games	2008	<i>Chrono Cross/Chrono Trigger</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008		Classic Arcade Medley	Arcade	Other
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Super Mario Bros.</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>World of Warcraft</i>		MMORPG	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Space Invaders</i>		Arcade	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Final Fantasy VI, X & Chrono Cross</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Metroid</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Mass Effect</i>		WRPG	

Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Guitar Hero</i>	Aerosmith	Rhythm Game	Other
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>God of War</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Crysis</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Brazil, 28/9/2008	2008	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2009	2009	<i>Medal of Honor Frontline</i>	Halftrack Chase	FPS	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2009	2009	<i>Super Mario Bros. 2</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2009	2009	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Cid: Wings of Song	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2009	2009	<i>Fire Emblem: Genealogy of the Holy War</i>		JRPG	
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2009	2009	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	To Zanarkand	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2009	2009	<i>Final Fantasy IX</i>	Melodies of Life	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2009	2009	<i>Tetris</i>	Korobeiniki	Puzzle	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2009	2009	<i>Xenosaga</i>	Dämmerung	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2009	2009	<i>Civilization IV</i>	Baba Yetu	TBS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2009	2009	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Hikari	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2009	2009	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i>	Final Destination	Action/Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2009	2009	<i>Super Smash Bros. Melee</i>	Medley	Beat 'em Up	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2009	2009	<i>Final Fantasy</i>	Epic Battles	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2009	2009	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Aerith's Theme	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2009	2009	<i>Super Mario Bros./Donkey Kong Country II/The Legend of Zelda</i>	Castles		Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2009	2009	<i>Kirby Super Star</i>	Kirby Super Star Suite	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2009	2009	<i>Halo</i>	Theme	FPS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2009	2009	<i>Katamari Damacy</i>	Prelude, Fugue and Groove	Puzzle	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2009	2009	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	Puzzle	Special
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony 2009	2009		Commodore 64 Medley		Other
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony 2009	2009	<i>Castlevania</i>		Action/Adventure	
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony 2009	2009	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>		Platform	
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony 2009	2009	<i>Chrono Cross</i>		JRPG	

PLAY! A Video Game Symphony 2009	2009	<i>Silent Hill 2</i>		Survival Horror	
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony 2009	2009	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony 2009	2009	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>		JRPG	
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony 2009	2009	<i>Battlefield</i>		FPS	
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony 2009	2009	<i>World of Warcraft</i>		MMORPG	
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony 2009	2009	<i>The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion</i>		WRPG	
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony 2009	2009	<i>Guild Wars</i>		MMORPG	
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Liberi Fatali	JRPG	Special
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Super Mario Bros</i>	Suite	Platform	Other
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Shenmue</i>	Sedge Tree	Action/Adventure	Area
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Battlefield 2/Battlefield 1942</i>	Suite	FPS	Other
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Aerith's Theme	JRPG	Character
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>	Suite	Platform	Other
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i>	Main Theme	Action/Adventure	Special
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Suite	JRPG	Other
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind</i>	Suite	WRPG	Other
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	Swing de Chocobo	JRPG	Character
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Chrono Cross/Chrono Trigger</i>	Suite	JRPG	Other
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>World of Warcraft</i>	Suite	MMORPG	Other
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Silent Hill 2</i>	Theme of Laura	Survival Horror	Character
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Halo</i>	Suite	FPS	Other
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	Suite	Adventure	Other
PLAY! A Video Game Symphony Live!	2009	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009		Classic Arcade Medley	Arcade	Other
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Frogger</i>		Arcade	
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Silent Hill</i>		Survival Horror	
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Myst</i>		Graphic Adventure	
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Final Fantasy</i>	Piano Solo	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater</i>		Action/Adventure	

Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Advent Rising</i>		Third Person Shooter	
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Warcraft</i>		RTS	
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Super Mario Bros</i>	Theme	Platform	Special
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Super Mario Bros</i>	Piano Solo	Platform	Other
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Japan, 21/9/2009	2009	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Orchestra Concert	2009	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Bombing Mission	JRPG	Area
Video Games Orchestra Concert	2009	<i>Street Fighter II</i>		Fighting	
Video Games Orchestra Concert	2009	<i>God of War</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Orchestra Concert	2009	<i>Civilization IV</i>	Baba Yetu	TBS	Special
Video Games Orchestra Concert	2009	<i>Castlevania</i>	Vampire Killer	Action/Adventure	Battle
Video Games Orchestra Concert	2009	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Orchestra Concert	2009	<i>Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Orchestra Concert	2009	<i>Chrono Cross/Chrono Trigger</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Orchestra Concert	2009	<i>Grandia</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Orchestra Concert	2009	<i>Final Fantasy Tactics/Final Fantasy XII</i>	Sakimoto Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Orchestra Concert	2009	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Final Fantasy VII Suite	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2010	2010	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask</i>	Termina Field	Action/Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2010	2010	<i>Super Mario Galaxy</i>	Gusty Garden Galaxy	Platform	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2010	2010	<i>Touhou Seirensen</i>	Emotional Skyscraper/Cosmic Mind	Shoot 'em up	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2010	2010	<i>Mega Man</i>	Shades of Blue	Platform	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2010	2010	<i>Xenosaga</i>	Gnosis	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2010	2010	<i>Mirror's Edge</i>	Still Alive	Action/Adventure	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2010	2010	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	Hymn of the Fayth	JRPG	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2010	2010	<i>Donkey Kong Country</i>	Donkey Kong Country Medley II/Son of DKC Medley	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2010	2010	<i>Super Mario Bros./Donkey Kong Country II/The Legend of Zelda</i>	Castles	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2010	2010	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Aria di Mezzo Carattere	JRPG	Special

Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2010	2010	<i>Halo</i>	Halo	FPS	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2010	2010	<i>Mother 3</i>	Oh, Buta Mask!	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2010	2010	<i>Super Mario Galaxy</i>	Gusty Garden Galaxy	Platform	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2010	2010	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Aerith's Theme	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2010	2010	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	Hyrulian Highlands	Action/Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2010	2010	<i>Unreal Tournament</i>	Hall of Champions	FPS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2010	2010	<i>Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater</i>		Action/Adventure	
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2010	2010	<i>Wario Ware</i>	Ashley's Theme	Party	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2010	2010	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	Hymn of the Fayth/Prelude	JRPG	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2010	2010	<i>Katamari Damacy</i>	Fugue/Groove	Puzzle	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2010	2010	<i>Civilization IV</i>	Coronation/Baba Yetu	TBS	Other
Press Start - The 5th Anniversary	2010	<i>Persona IV</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Press Start - The 5th Anniversary	2010	<i>Ys/II</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Press Start - The 5th Anniversary	2010	<i>Samurai Spirits</i>		Fighting	Other
Press Start - The 5th Anniversary	2010	<i>Kamaitachi no Yoru/Otogirisou</i>	Medley	Visual Novel	Other
Press Start - The 5th Anniversary	2010	<i>Spelunker</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Press Start - The 5th Anniversary	2010	<i>Suikoden</i>	Into a World of Illusions	JRPG	Special
Press Start - The 5th Anniversary	2010	<i>Professor Layton and the Curious Village</i>	Main Theme	Puzzle	Special
Press Start - The 5th Anniversary	2010	<i>Okami</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Press Start - The 5th Anniversary	2010	<i>Fantasy Zone</i>	Medley	Scrolling Shooter	Other
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010		Classic Arcade Medley	Arcade	Other
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>God of War</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Space Invaders</i>		Arcade	
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	Flute Link	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Warcraft</i>		RTS	
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Super Mario Bros</i>	Theme	Platform	Special

Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Guitar Hero</i>	Jump	Rhythm Game	Other
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Mega Man</i>		Scrolling Shooter	Other
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Philadelphia, 17/04/2010	2010	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011	2011	<i>Super Mario Galaxy/Mega Man X6/Final Fantasy VII</i>	Towards the Stars		Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011	2011	<i>Kingdom Hearts II</i>	Fate of the Unknown	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011	2011	<i>Disgaea: Hour of Darkness</i>	Laharl-sama no Sanbika	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011	2011	<i>Civilization V</i>	Medley	TBS	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011	2011	<i>Star Fox</i>	End Credits	Shoot 'em up	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011	2011	<i>Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater</i>	Sea Breeze	Action/Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011	2011	<i>Mother 3</i>	Oh, Buta-Mask!	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011	2011	<i>Metal Gear</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011	2011	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011	2011	<i>Pokemon Red/Blue/Black/White/Indigo League TV series</i>	Pokemedley	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2011	2011	<i>Katamari Damacy</i>	Katamari Damacy Suite, mvt. 3: Groove	Puzzle	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Super Mario Land</i>	Theme	Platform	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Final Fantasy</i>	Prologue	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Warcraft II</i>	Tides of Darkness	RTS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Oregon Trail Deluxe</i>	You Have Died of Dysentery	Puzzle	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Phoenix Wright</i>	Objection!	Graphic Adventure	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Electric De Chocobo	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Secret of Mana</i>	Angel's Fear	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Chrono Cross/Chrono Trigger</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Banjo Kazooie</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	Puzzle	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Xenosaga</i>	Dämmerung	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2011	2011	<i>Tetris</i>	Korobeiniki	Puzzle	Special
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011		Classic Arcade Medley	Arcade	Other

Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Mega Man</i>	Medley	Scrolling Shooter	Other
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Assassin's Creed 2</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>God of War</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Frogger</i>		Arcade	
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Final Fantasy</i>		JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Halo</i>	Trilogy Suite	FPS	Other
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	Flute Solo	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>World of Warcraft</i>		MMORPG	
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Guitar Hero</i>	Jump	Rhythm Game	Other
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Super Mario Bros.</i>	Piano Solo	Platform	Other
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Montreal, Canada, 30/04/2011	2011	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	FPS	Special
Video Games Orchestra - Rockstral Game Music	2011	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Bombing Mission	JRPG	Area
Video Games Orchestra - Rockstral Game Music	2011	<i>Silent Hill 2</i>	Theme of Laura	Survival Horror	Character
Video Games Orchestra - Rockstral Game Music	2011	<i>God of War 2</i>	The End Begins (to Rock)	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Orchestra - Rockstral Game Music	2011	<i>Super Mario World</i>	Super Mario World (Big Band Version)	Platform	Special
Video Games Orchestra - Rockstral Game Music	2011	<i>Castlevania</i>	Vampire Killer	Action/Adventure	Battle
Video Games Orchestra - Rockstral Game Music	2011	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Suite	JRPG	Other
Video Games Orchestra - Rockstral Game Music	2011	<i>Chrono Cross</i>	Time's Scar	JRPG	Special
Video Games Orchestra - Rockstral Game Music	2011	<i>Radical Dreamers</i>		Visual Novel	

Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2012	2012	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess</i>	Princess of Shadows	Action/Adventure	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2012	2012	<i>Kirby Super Star</i>	Kirby Super Star	Platform	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2012	2012	<i>Donkey Kong Country</i>	DK Suite	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2012	2012	<i>Chrono Cross/Chrono Trigger</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2012	2012	<i>Age of War</i>	Glorious Morning	Scrolling Strategy	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2012	2012	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time</i>	Symphony for the Hero of Time, mvt. 2: Gerudo Temple	Action/Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2012	2012	<i>World of Warcraft: Cataclysm</i>	Nightsong	MMORPG	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2012	2012	<i>Maplestory</i>	The Dark Future of Maplestory	MMORPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2012	2012	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Maria and Draco	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2012	2012	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Liberi Fatali	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2012	2012	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Those Who Fight	JRPG	Battle
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2012	2012	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Hikari	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2012	2012	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>	Sonic Mix AB	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2012	2012	<i>Dragon Quest</i>	Overture	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2012	2012	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2012	2012	<i>Bastion</i>	Setting Sail, Coming Home	WRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2012	2012	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Liberi Fatali	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2012	2012	<i>fIOW</i>	The World of fIOW	Puzzle	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2012	2012	<i>The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker</i>	Hyrulian Highlands	Action/Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2012	2012	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Dancing Mad	JRPG	Battle
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2012	2012	<i>Civilization IV</i>	Coronation/Baba Yetu	TBS	Other
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword</i>	Ballad of the Goddess	Action/Adventure	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Super Smash Bros. Brawl</i>	Main Theme	Beat 'em Up	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Sonic Adventure 2</i>	Escape from the City	Platform	Area
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Final Fantasy IX</i>	The Place I'll Return to Someday	JRPG	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time</i>	Hero of Wubz	Action/Adventure	Other
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Pokemon Red/Blue</i>	I Choose You!	JRPG	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Baten Kaitos Origins</i>	Le Ali Del Principio	JRPG	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Journey</i>	I Was Born for This (World Premiere)	Adventure	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Kirby's Adventure</i>	The World Shall Return to Zero	Platform	Special

Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	Resurrection Dormin	Action/Adventure	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Neverwinter Nights 2</i>	Forgotten Realms	WRPG	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Main Theme (Skyrim)	WRPG	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Assassin's Creed</i>	Pieces of Eden	Action/Adventure	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney</i>	Objection!	Graphic Adventure	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>World of Warcraft: Cataclysm</i>	Nightsong	MMORPG	Area
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>Xenosaga: Episode I</i>	Ormus and the Resurrection	JRPG	Special
Infinite Lives: A VGM Choir Concert	2012	<i>ICO</i>	You Were There	Action/Adventure	Special
Live at Columbia Theatre	2012	<i>Final Fantasy VII/Goldeneye/Killer Instinct/Starcraft/Street Fighter II/Blaster Master/Zero Wing/Contra/Mega Man 2/Battletoads/Punch Out Wii/Double Dragon</i>	War Was Beginning		Other
Live at Columbia Theatre	2012	<i>Final Fantasy IV/Final Fantasy IX/The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask/The Legend of Zelda/Little Big Adventure/Secret of Mana/Donkey Kong Country/Chrono Trigger/Final Fantasy VII/Final Fantasy VI/The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time/Super Mario RPG</i>	Medley o' Light		Other
Live at Columbia Theatre	2012	<i>Pokemon/Super Mario World/Super Mario Bros 3/EVO/The Legend of Zelda/Final Fantasy IV/Super Ghouls n' Ghosts/Castlevania 2: Simon's Quest/Kirby Super Star/Day of the Tentacle/Conker's Bad Fur Day/Tetris</i>	R4 used Nightmare!		Other
Live at Columbia Theatre	2012	<i>Final Fantasy IX/Final Fantasy VI/Chrono Trigger/The Legend of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds/Kirby Super Star/Mother 3/Sonic the Hedgehog 2/Mega Man 3/Faxanadu/Super Mario RPG/Earthbound/Mega Man 2/Breath of Fire 2/Chrono Cross/Pokemon/Final Fantasy/Super Mario World</i>	Keep Fighting		Other

Live at Columbia Theatre	2012	<i>Final Fantasy IX/Final Fantasy IV/Earthbound/Chrono Trigger/Donkey Kong Country/Super Bomberman/Earthbound/Sonic the Hedgehog 2/Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles/Katamari Damacy/Super Mario Kart/Kirby Super Star/Super Mario RPG</i>	Boing?		Other
Live at Columbia Theatre	2012	<i>Mario Kart 64</i>	Mario Kart 64	Racing	Area
Live at Columbia Theatre	2012	<i>Earthbound</i>	Finale	JRPG	Special
Live at Symphony Hall	2012	<i>Grandia</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Live at Symphony Hall	2012	<i>Chrono Trigger</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Live at Symphony Hall	2012	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	Puzzle	Special
Live at Symphony Hall	2012	<i>Metal Gear Solid 3</i>	Snake Eater	Action/Adventure	Special
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Assassin's Creed 2</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Frogger</i>		Arcade	
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Pokémon</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Metroid</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>World of Warcraft</i>	Lament of the Highborne	MMORPG	Character
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Uncharted II</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Tetris</i>	The Tetris Opera	Puzzle	
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	25th Anniversary Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Mass Effect</i>		WRPG	
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Starcraft II: Wings of Liberty</i>		MOBA	
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Liberi Fatali	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Super Mario Bros</i>	Flute Mario	Platform	Other

Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Guitar Hero</i>	The Pretender	Rhythm Game	Other
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Street Fighter II</i>		Beat 'em Up	
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 26/05/2012	2012	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	FPS	Special
Videogame Orchestra - Last But Not Least	2012	<i>Lotus III</i>	The Ultimate Challenge	Racing	Area
Videogame Orchestra - Last But Not Least	2012	<i>The Last Ninja</i>	The Wilderness	Action/Adventure	Area
Videogame Orchestra - Last But Not Least	2012	<i>Monkey Island</i>	The International House of Mojo	Graphic Adventure	Area
Videogame Orchestra - Last But Not Least	2012	<i>Battle Squadron</i>	Introduction/Defeated Army/The Morning Bell	Scrolling Shooter	Other
Videogame Orchestra - Last But Not Least	2012	<i>Super Mario World 2</i>	Yoshi's Island Medley	Platform	Other
Videogame Orchestra - Last But Not Least	2012	<i>Axelay</i>	Stage 1	Scrolling Shooter	Area
Videogame Orchestra - Last But Not Least	2012	<i>Mega Man X</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Videogame Orchestra - Last But Not Least	2012	<i>Castlevania: Harmony Of Dissonance</i>	Successor of Fate	Action/Adventure	Special
Videogame Orchestra - Last But Not Least	2012	<i>Turrican</i>	Medley	Shoot 'em up	Other
Videogame Orchestra - Last But Not Least	2012	<i>Venus The Flytrap</i>		Scrolling Shooter	
Videogame Orchestra - Last But Not Least	2012	<i>Bubba 'N' Stix</i>	Stage 1	Scrolling Shooter	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Persona IV</i>	Traumerei and Aria of the Soul	JRPG	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Uncharted</i>	Nate's Theme	Action/Adventure	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Pokemon Red/Blue/Black/White/Indigo League TV series</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Skyrim</i>	From Past to Present	WRPG	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Unreal Tournament 2004</i>	Hall of Champions	FPS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>World of Warcraft: Cataclysm</i>	Nightsong	MMORPG	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Katamari Damacy</i>	Suite: Prelude/Fugue and Groove	Puzzle	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Super Mario 64</i>	Bob-Omb Battlefield	Platform	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Mega Man 2</i>	200X	Platform	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Sam and Max Hit the Road</i>	Sam and Max Hit the Road	Adventure	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Final Fantasy VII Main Theme	JRPG	Special

Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Xenosaga</i>	Dämmerung	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Terra's Resolve	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>Halo: Combat Evolved</i>		FPS	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2013	2013	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Dragonborn Theme	WRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2013	2013	<i>Street Fighter II</i>	Guile's Theme	Fighting	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2013	2013	<i>Kid Icarus</i>	Kid Icarus Melody	Action	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2013	2013	<i>Banjo Kazooie</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2013	2013	<i>Super Mario World</i>	End Credits	Platform	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2013	2013	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Dragonborn Theme	WRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2013	2013	<i>Mega Man 3</i>	Protoman's Whistle	Platform	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2013	2013	<i>Journey</i>	I Was Born for This	Adventure	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2013	2013	<i>Donkey Kong 64</i>	Kongcerto 64	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2013	2013	<i>Super Smash Bros./Melee/Brawl</i>	Super Smash GSbr0s	Beat 'em Up	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2013	2013	<i>World of Warcraft</i>	Medley	MMORPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2013	2013	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Silent Hill 2</i>		Survival Horror	
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Monkey Island</i>		Graphic Adventure	
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Super Smash Bros. Brawl</i>		Beat 'em Up	
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>World of Warcraft</i>	Lament of the Highborne	MMORPG	Character
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Journey</i>		Adventure	
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Tetris</i>	The Tetris Opera	Puzzle	Other
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>		WRPG	
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Destiny</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Super Marios Bros.</i>	Theme	Platform	Special
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Guitar Hero</i>	The Pretender	Rhythm Game	Other
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Liberi Fatali	JRPG	Battle

Video Games Live - Santiago, Chile, 28/09/2013	2013	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	FPS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>Super Mario World</i>	Overworld Theme	Platform	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>Tales of Symphonia</i>	Fighting of the Spirit	JRPG	Battle
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>Civilization V</i>	Civilization V Medley	TBS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>Tetris</i>	Korobeiniki	Puzzle	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker</i>	Hyrulian Highlands	Action/Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Maria and Draco	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>Oregon Trail Deluxe</i>	You Have Died of Dysentery	Puzzle	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>Fire Emblem: Awakening</i>	Don't Speak Her Name!	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>Journey</i>	I Was Born for This	Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>Final Fantasy X-2</i>	1000 Words/A Wish That Spans the Ages	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>Pokemon X/Y</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King</i>	Arthas, My Son	MMORPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2014	2014	<i>Kingdom Hearts II</i>	Fate of the Unknown	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Super Smash Bros. Brawl</i>	Medley	Beat 'em Up	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Star Fox</i>	Star Fox Credits	Shoot 'em up	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Trogdor/Peasant's Quest/Guitar Hero II</i>	The Legend of Trogdor!	Rhythm Game	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Chrono Cross/Chrono Trigger</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	Suteki Da Ne	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Mass Effect/2/3</i>	The Ballad of Commander Shepard	WRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney</i>	Objection!	Graphic Adventure	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>The Wonderful 101</i>	Hero March	Action/Adventure	Battle
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater</i>		Action/Adventure	
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Hikari	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Animal Crossing: New Leaf</i>	Animal Crossing Sea Shanty	Simulation	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Pokemon Red/Blue</i>	GSO Plays Pokemon	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>Xenosaga Episode I: Der Wille zur Macht</i>	Gnosis	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2014	2014	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword</i>	Skyward Symphony	Action/Adventure	Other
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Journey</i>		Adventure	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Mass Effect</i>		WRPG	

rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Guild Wars</i>		MMORPG	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Bioshock</i>		FPS	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Lair</i>		Action/Adventure	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>God of War</i>		Action/Adventure	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Dragon Age</i>		WRPG	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Portal</i>		Puzzle	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i>		Action/Adventure	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Chrono Cross/Chrono Trigger</i>		JRPG	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Final Fantasy</i>		JRPG	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Lost Odyssey</i>		JRPG	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Castlevania</i>		Action/Adventure	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>		Action/Adventure	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>		JRPG	
rePLAY: Symphony of Heroes	2014	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
VGO Boston Live 2014	2014	<i>Chrono Cross</i>	Time's Scar	JRPG	Special
VGO Boston Live 2014	2014	<i>Chrono Trigger</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
VGO Boston Live 2014	2014	<i>Mega Man 2</i>	Piano Suite	Scrolling Shooter	Other
VGO Boston Live 2014	2014	<i>Plants Versus Zombies</i>	Zombies on Your Lawn	Strategy	Area
VGO Boston Live 2014	2014	<i>Final Fantasy XIII</i>	Blinded by Light	JRPG	Battle
VGO Boston Live 2014	2014	<i>Dragon's Dogma</i>	Coils of Light	JRPG	Special
VGO Boston Live 2014	2014	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Solo Piano Suite	JRPG	Other
VGO x Bahamut Live 2014	2014	<i>Dragon's Dogma</i>	Eternal Return	JRPG	Special
VGO x Bahamut Live 2014	2014	<i>Street Fighter II</i>	World Warrior Theme	Beat 'em Up	Character
VGO x Bahamut Live 2014	2014	<i>D4: Dark Dreams Don't Die</i>	Salvation - Theme of D4	Graphic Adventure	Special
VGO x Bahamut Live 2014	2014	<i>D4: Dark Dreams Don't Die</i>	Drank Dead DOM Die	Graphic Adventure	Special
VGO x Bahamut Live 2014	2014	<i>Cytus, Magnolia, Holy Knight</i>	Rayark Medley	Rhythm Game	Other
VGO x Bahamut Live 2014	2014	<i>Dragon's Dogma</i>	Coils of Light	JRPG	Special
VGO x Bahamut Live 2014	2014	<i>Chrono Trigger</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
VGO x Bahamut Live 2014	2014	<i>Plants Versus Zombies</i>	Zombies on Your Lawn	Strategy	Area
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Megaman</i>		Scrolling Shooter	
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Bioshock Infinite</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Bioshock</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Disney Fantasia: Music Evolved	JRPG	Other

Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Guitar Hero</i>	Radioactive	Rhythm Game	Other
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Guitar Hero</i>	Locked Out of Heaven	Rhythm Game	Other
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Aria di Mezzo Carattere	JRPG	Special
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Cave Story</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Portal 2</i>	Want You Gone	FPS	Special
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Civilization IV</i>	Baba Yetu	TBS	Special
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Dragonborn Theme	WRPG	Special
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Tetris</i>	The Tetris Opera	Puzzle	Other
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Journey</i>		Adventure	
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>The Banner Saga</i>	Medley	WRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Hearthstone: Heroes of Warcraft</i>		Digital Collectible Card Game	
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Monkey Island</i>		Graphic Adventure	
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>League of Legends</i>		MOBA	
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>League of Legends</i>	Nami's Theme	MOBA	Character
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Liberi Fatali	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Los Angeles, CA, 11/06/2014	2014	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	FPS	Special
Video Games Orchestra - Live at Symphony Hall	2014	<i>Street Fighter II</i>	Theme of World Warriors	Fighting	
Video Games Orchestra - Live at Symphony Hall	2014	<i>Chrono Trigger</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Orchestra - Live at Symphony Hall	2014	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	Puzzle	
Video Games Orchestra - Live at Symphony Hall	2014	<i>Castlevania</i>	Vampire Killer	Action/Adventure	Battle
Video Games Orchestra - Live at Symphony Hall	2014	<i>Final Fantasy Tactics</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Orchestra - Live at Symphony Hall	2014	<i>Grandia</i>	The End of the World	JRPG	Special
Video Games Orchestra - Live at Symphony Hall	2014	<i>Grandia</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
Video Games Orchestra - Live at Symphony Hall	2014	<i>God of War</i>	Main Theme	Action/Adventure	Special
Video Games Orchestra - Live at Symphony Hall	2014	<i>God of War 2</i>	The End Begins (to Rock)	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Orchestra - Live at Symphony Hall	2014	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Suite	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Super Smash Bros. Brawl/Punch-Out!/Super Smash Bros. Melee</i>	Super Smash Bros. GSfOurth Installment	Beat 'em Up	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney</i>	Objection!	Graphic Adventure	Special

Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Mercenaries 2</i>	Oh No You Didn't!	Action	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword</i>	Skyward Symphony	Action/Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Chrono Cross</i>	Themes from Chrono Cross	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Pokemon Red/Blue</i>	Nostalgia Red/Blue	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Pokemon X/Y</i>	Kiseki	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Dragon Age: Inquisition</i>	Ring in the Dawn	WRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Hikari	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker</i>	Outset Island	Action/Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Super Mario 3D World</i>	Credits	Platform	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Sephiroth and Sadness	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>fIOW</i>	The World of fIOW	Puzzle	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Guild Wars 2</i>	Fear Not This Night	MMORPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>World of Warcraft</i>	Medley	MMORPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Okami</i>	Shachimaru's Theme	Action/Adventure	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2015	2015	<i>Fire Emblem: Awakening</i>	I Challenge My Fate	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Mario Kart</i>	Infinite Color	Racing	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Kid Icarus</i>	Medley	Action	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>The Stanley Parable/Portal</i>	Stanley's Meddling/Still Alive	Interactive Fiction	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>MegaMan2</i>	200X	Platform	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Terra's Resolve	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Rhythm Heaven Fever</i>	Air Rally	Rhythm Game	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>To the Moon</i>	Everything's Alright	WRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Katamari Damacy</i>	Katamari Damacy Suite, mvt. 3: Groove	Puzzle	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Civilization IV</i>	Coronation/Baba Yetu	TBS	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask</i>	Clock Town	Action/Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Okami</i>	Reset the Credits	Action/Adventure	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Maplestory</i>	The Dark Future of Maplestory	MMORPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Metroid Prime</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	Aerith's Theme	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time/Majora's Mask/Twilight Princess</i>	Mvt.1: The Hero's Call/Mvt.2:The Desert Temple/Mvt.3: The	Adventure	Other

			Gerudo King/Mvt.4: The End		
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Mass Effect/2/3</i>	The Ballad of Commander Shepard	WRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Chrono Cross/Chrono Trigger</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2015	2015	<i>Halo: Combat Evolved</i>	Halo Medley	FPS	Other
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Journey</i>		Adventure	
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>League of Legends</i>		MOBA	
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Pokémon</i>	Metal Arrangement	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Donkey Kong Country</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>World of Warcraft</i>	Invincible	MMORPG	Special
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Earthworm Jim</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Tetris</i>	The Tetris Opera	Puzzle	Other
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	25th Anniversary Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Liberi Fatali	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Aria di Mezzo Carattere	JRPG	Special
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Dragonborn Theme	WRPG	Special
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>ICO</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Guitar Hero</i>	The Pretender	Rhythm Game	Other
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Street Fighter II</i>		Beat 'em Up	
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - New York, 31/01/2015	2015	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	FPS	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Super Mario Galaxy</i>	Gusty Garden Galaxy	Platform	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Uncharted 2</i>	Nate	Action/Adventure	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops</i>	Calling to the Night	Action/Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Angry Birds</i>	Passive-Aggressive Avians	Puzzle	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Xenoblade Chronicles</i>	Beyond the Sky	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Mother 3</i>	Oh, Buta- Mask/Hinawa	JRPG	Character
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt</i>	The Wolven Storm	WRPG	Area

Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess</i>	The Hero of Time Suite: Movement IV-The End	Action/Adventure	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	Dearly Beloved	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Puzzle Swap</i>	A CapPuzzle Swap	Puzzle	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Donkey Kong 64</i>	Kongcerto 64	Platform	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Team Fortress 2</i>	Soldier of Dance	FPS	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Undertale</i>	Bird that Carries You Over a Disproportionally Small Gap	WRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Pokemon Ruby/Sapphire/Emerald</i>	Clash of Titans	JRPG	Battle
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Deadly Premonition</i>	Life is Beautiful	Survival Horror	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Pokemon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Time, Darkness, Sky</i>	I Don't Want to Say Goodbye	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Pokemon Ruby/Sapphire/Emerald/Omeg a Ruby/Alpha Sapphire</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Fall 2016	2016	<i>Super Smash Bros. Brawl</i>	Super Smash GSbrOs	Beat 'em Up	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>Okami</i>	The Sun Rises	Action/Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>Final Fantasy IV</i>	Prologue	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>Dark Souls</i>	The Kindled of Lordran	Souls-Like	Battle
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>Pokemon XD: Gale of Darkness</i>	Mirror B's Theme	JRPG	Battle
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>The Wonderful 101</i>	Hero March	Action/Adventure	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Dancing Mad	JRPG	Battle
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>Before the Echo</i>	Piano Jam	Rhythm Game	Other
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>	A Simple Melody Done Cleanly	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>Earthbound</i>	Smiles and Tears	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>	Sonicquarium	Platform	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	To Zanarkand	JRPG	Special
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>	The Accursed Land	Action/Adventure	Area
Gamer Symphony Orchestra Spring 2016	2016	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Dragonborn Theme	WRPG	Special
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>God of War</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Journey</i>		Adventure	
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Chrono Trigger</i>	Piano Medley	JRPG	Other

Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Final Fantasy</i>	Boss Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Donkey Kong Country</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney</i>		Visual Novel	
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Civilization IV</i>	Baba Yetu	TBS	Special
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Tetris</i>	The Tetris Opera	Puzzle	Other
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	25th Anniversary Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Super Marios Bros.</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>World of Warcraft</i>	Magnificent Desolation	MMORPG	Other
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Dragonborn Theme	WRPG	Special
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>ICO</i>	You Were There	Action/Adventure	Special
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Newark, NJ 02/01/2016	2016	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	FPS	Special
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>God of War</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Journey</i>		Adventure	
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Donkey Kong Country</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>World of Warcraft</i>		MMORPG	
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Street Fighter II</i>		Beat 'em Up	
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Tetris</i>	The Tetris Opera	Puzzle	Other
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	25th Anniversary Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Super Mario Bros</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Advent Rising</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>ICO</i>	You Were There	Action/Adventure	Special
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Dragonborn Theme	WRPG	Special
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other

Video Games Live - Syracuse, NY 10/05/2017	2017	<i>Portal</i>	Still Alive	FPS	Special
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Mega Man</i>		Scrolling Shooter	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Mass Effect</i>		WRPG	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Uncharted</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney</i>		Graphic Adventure	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Pokémon</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Kingdom Hearts</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>League of Legends</i>		MOBA	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>World of Warcraft</i>		MMORPG	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Super Mario Bros.</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>		WRPG	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Street Fighter II</i>		Beat 'em Up	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Live - Wilmington, DE 13/01/2018	2018	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Final Fantasy</i>	Prelude	JRPG	Special
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Sonic Forces</i>	Fist Bump	Platform	Area
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Persona Q</i>	Maze of Life	JRPG	Special
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Persona 5</i>	Life Will Change	JRPG	Battle

Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>	Main Theme/Time's Scar	JRPG	Special
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Castlevania</i>	Vampire Killer	Action/Adventure	Battle
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>	Green Hill Zone	Platform	Area
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Re: Legend</i>	Legend's Land	JRPG	Special
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Sonic Adventure 2</i>	Escape from the City	Platform	Area
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Sonic Adventure 2</i>	Live and Learn	Platform	Area
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Final Fantasy</i>	Blues de Chocobo	JRPG	Character
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Metal Gear Solid Peace Walker</i>	Heavens Divide	Action/Adventure	Special
Live at Brazil Game Show	2019	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i>	Snake Eater	Action/Adventure	Special
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>Dragon Quest XI</i>	Opening Theme	JRPG	Special
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild</i>	Trailer	Action/Adventure	Other
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time</i>	Gerudo Valley	Action/Adventure	Area
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	To Zanarkand	JRPG	Special
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>Final Fantasy VII</i>	One Winged Angel	JRPG	Battle
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>Fallout 4</i>	Main Theme	WRPG	Special
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>Mass Effect</i>	Main Theme	WRPG	Special
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>Octopath Traveler</i>	Main Theme	JRPG	Special
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>Halo</i>	Medley	FPS	Other
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>Everquest</i>	Beyond the Horizon	MMORPG	Special
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	25th Anniversary Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>Final Fantasy VI</i>	Terra's Theme	JRPG	Character
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>Final Fantasy XV</i>	Somnus	JRPG	Special
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>Final Fantasy VIII</i>	Liberi Fatali	JRPG	Battle
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>	Staff Credits	Action/Adventure	Other
London Video Game Orchestra - Theatre Peckham	2019	<i>The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim</i>	Dragonborn Theme	WRPG	Special
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Castlevania</i>	Castlevania Rock	Action/Adventure	Other

Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Metroid</i>		FPS	
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Shadow of the Colossus</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Mass Effect</i>		WRPG	
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Overwatch</i>	We Are Overwatch	FPS	Special
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Metal Gear Solid</i>	Medley	Action/Adventure	Other
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Earthworm Jim</i>		Platform	
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>The Legend of Zelda</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Undertale</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Super Marios Bros.</i>	Medley	Platform	Other
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Okami</i>		Action/Adventure	
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Final Fantasy X</i>	To Zanarkand	JRPG	Special
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Pokémon</i>		JRPG	
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Chrono Trigger/Chrono Cross</i>	Medley	JRPG	Other
Video Games Live - Buffalo, NY 13/01/2019	2019	<i>Halo</i>		FPS	
2020.08 - Otakuthon	2020	<i>Castlevania</i>	Django the Vampire Killer	Action/Adventure	Character
2020.08 - Otakuthon	2020	<i>Final Fantasy XV</i>	Bros on the Road	JRPG	Area
2020.08 - Otakuthon	2020	<i>Animal Crossing: New Horizons</i>	Main Theme	Simulation	Special
2020.08 - Otakuthon	2020	<i>Okami</i>	Reset	Action/Adventure	Special
2020.08 - Otakuthon	2020	<i>Nier: Automata</i>	Weight of the World	JRPG	Special
2020.08 - Otakuthon	2020	<i>Resident Evil 2: Remake</i>	Saudade	Action/Adventure	Special

Appendix 6.2

Guidelines Before Application Form for Licensing Square Enix Music for Concerts

If you want to play a song managed by Square Enix at a concert or concert, please check the following guidelines and contact us using the form.

We will confirm the contents of your inquiry and contact you regarding the necessary procedures.

It may take some time to confirm, so please contact us with plenty of time.

Guidelines:

- Please refrain from using our name, our game title, or our employee name in the performance name as it may be mistaken that we are involved.
- Please refrain from using music other than performances such as recording and distribution.
- Related to the performance (including but not limited to use during the performance, transmission on the performance website, SNS, etc., posters and other notices, leaflets, programs, pamphlets and other handouts.) Please handle the related information as follows:
 1. Please refrain from using our logo, game title logo, game still images, videos, artwork or their derivative works.
 2. Please keep the game title name and our company name as the source.
 3. Please keep the names of the writers (composers, lyrics, arrangers, etc.) who are our employees as incidental information of the songs.
- If there is any change in the content of the performance, please contact us as soon as possible.

Please note that depending on the content of the change, it may not be accepted as free use.

* Click here for free use of songs managed by Square Enix

[Points to <https://support.jp.square-enix.com/faqarticle.php?kid=79414&ret=main&id=3021&la=0&pv=20>]

In principle, we do not check the arranged songs each time, but please be careful not to spoil the image of the songs. We may ask you to confirm the contents arranged by us for songs managed by us that have not passed a certain period of time since the game was released. In that case, please cooperate.